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ITORIAL

TAKING CREDIT

The Reagan Administration will claim credit for the apparent cooling of the latest Polish crisis and its claims should be denied. It was clearly not the bluster from Washington that did it.

Instead, the credit should be divided among the Polish people and their spirited factions, the West Europeans with their pressures for trade, and, yes, détente, and the old realists in the Kremlin. The warnings, threats and incendiary statements from official Washington during the resolution of the recent crisis (there are more to come) were just offstage noises in the drama.

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger on April 6 said it was hard to tell whether there would be a "conventional invasion" or what he quite oddly called an "invasion by osmosis." That was just before Leonid Brezhnev in Prague said he was content to leave the matter in the hands of the Communist Party of Poland.

After Brezhnev's speech, it looks more likely that, for a while at least, the osmotic process will work from Warsaw outward, rather than the other way around. That is not to suggest that Solidarity's democratizing thrust will rapidly crack the foundations of the Soviet system. But the leaven of those ten million determined Poles will be at work throughout Eastern Europe.

Real "leadership," of which we hear so much, is calm and quiet, sure of its cause and its tactics. It does its work behind the scenes, not shouting from the wings. The Poles themselves, and their Russian masters, have not been fooled by the official hysteria in Washington.

It was not the confrontational globalism from Washington that brought Poland and the world a breathing spell. It was a complex of pressures, mainly economic and political and largely European, which made the military posturing irrelevant. Is it too much to hope that even Reagan can learn that lesson?

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John S. Friedman

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Katha Pollitt

PROTECTIONISM IS BACK

THE COMING TRADE WAR AT HOME

JEFF FRIEDEN

The Reagan Administration has faced—and sidestepped—its first major decision on trade policy. Troubled U.S. auto makers, the United Automobile Workers and many Congressmen have been demanding protection from Japanese imports for more than a year, and many Administration officials are sympathetic. Yet restrictions on trade are abhorrent to some of the free-market supply-siders and free-trade Wall Streeters in Ronald Reagan's Cabinet. After months of bickering, the Cabinet remains divided, and unable to make a definitive decision.

For now, the Administration has decided to take the middle road. Instead of calling for import restrictions, members of the Government have "suggested" to the Japanese that they reduce their car sales in the United States "voluntarily," while reminding them that failure to do so will probably result in Congress's imposing import quotas. The result, the Administration hopes, will be to slow the flood of Japanese cars without raising the specter of outright protectionism. Nevertheless, the Administration has clearly embarked on what *Business Week* calls "the most nationalistic U.S. trade policy since World War II."

The struggle over auto imports is only the beginning skirmish in what will be one of the more momentous battles of the Reagan Administration and beyond. At stake is the role of the United States in the world economy—and, by extension, the shape of the domestic economy in years to come.

Politics, wrote Ambrose Bierce, is "a strife

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LETTERS.

IMAGINING THE BOMB

Williamsburg, Va.

Whenever I think about it, I'm grateful that I was born after 1945. I grew up knowing that the world might end at any minute; yet there are many millions in our own country who grew up without that knowledge. I can't imagine what it was like to lose the security of knowing that your culture would continue after you were gone. Probably many people in straitened circumstances never thought about that security; for as many others, though, the loss must have been terrifying. Some of the participants in the first atomic tests weren't entirely sure that the chain reaction they were about to set off wouldn't continue until there was no matter left to feed it.

When I was about 10 years old (around the time of the fallout shelter craze and the Cuban missile crisis), I remember going Christmas shopping with my mother, who naturally asked me what I wanted that year. I don't remember what I said, but I remember what I thought. "What's the difference? We're not going to live till Christmas anyway." Strange thoughts for a 10-year-old, although by the time Christmas actually arrived I'm sure I had managed to repress them. At any rate, periodically throughout my childhood I believed that I was never going to grow up.

It was also in the early 1960s that I began to devour the "disaster novels" that flooded the best-seller lists then, much as fantasies of Soviet subversion do today. I remember books by Pat Frank, Philip Wylie, Eugene Burdick and Harvey Wheeler. Then there was the species of science fiction story generically known as "after-the-blowup" that presented vivid examples of our ruined world far in the future, with the survivors barely emerging (or not emerging) from barbarism. (Andre Norton and John Brunner come to mind here. The most famous such novel, Walter Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, which I read in high school, concludes fatalistically with a *second* nuclear war after civilization has painfully reconstructed itself.) The DC line of comic books, my other passion at the time, featured a group of futuristic adventurers known as the Atomic Knights, seemingly the only forces of order left in a landscape that I remember as remarkably barren, even for holocausts.

I don't wish to conflate these genres, however; the first was designed to scare you (and did) with what might happen, while the second suggested that there would always be a place for red-blooded adventurers, a comforting possibility to bookish preadolescents. (I exclude Miller's more thoughtful work.) Yet these types of stories had something in common; they presented atomic war as inevitable. There was always a character who said something like, "If only they'd had better sense," the implication being that we wouldn't.

So the possibility, if not necessity, of nuclear holocaust was very much a part of my childhood culture and, I think, the culture as a whole at that time. (*Dr. Strangelove* was another product of the period.) It must have been with the psychic equivalent of a sigh of relief that I and the country turned to other things later in the decade. There was an underlying assumption to the long decade from 1965 to 1975: that whatever ups and downs we would experience in international relations, we and the Russians had an interest in keeping the nuclear arms race under control and were taking steps to that end. Thus it was possible to think about (and agitate for) peace and justice, freedom and equality while repressing our pit-and-pendulum situation.

One incident, for me, turned the clock back a decade. In the spring of 1972, Nixon had the waters around North Vietnamese ports mined. Soviet supply ships were en route, and the first day at least had the makings of a classic confrontation of the sort described in a novel by Hans Hellmut Kirst (*The Seventh Day*), in which a nervous sentry accidentally kills an "enemy" across the border in Berlin and little by little the machinery is engaged until, by the seventh day, "Europe had ceased to exist. The hours of mankind were numbered." (I have never forgotten the ending, although I haven't seen the book for fifteen years. I don't remember, though, who started it.) At any rate, the Russians blinked, and treated Nixon's escalation as the exercise in diplomacy it wasn't. I shook in my dark-brown, mid-calf, youth-culture boots that night, and went to bed not being sure whether I would wake up. (And feeling foolish when I did.)

The point in detailing these personal anecdotes—and there are others—is not that they're unique; it's that I suspect they're not unique. E. P. Thompson's "A Letter to America" [*The Nation*, January 24] has thoroughly described our infinitely dangerous situation. The assumption that both sides recognize their interest in limiting the arms race is no longer tenable. In Thompson's view, only an international mass movement will be able to postpone the inevitable.

If many, perhaps most, people who grew up with The Bomb, as it is familiarly called, have had experiences and memories similar to mine, I would like to think this common background will prove helpful in organizing our mass movement. I'm afraid, though, that their lesson is more ambiguous, and that our failures of imagination aren't confined to strategic doctrine.

If, as I've tried to suggest, our culture and even our dreams are saturated with images of The Bomb, it may well be that we have lost the capacity to respond as we should. In the face of such an all-pervading outrage, the temptation to withdraw and let "them" take care of it becomes especially strong. For who among us is able to live day in and day out in a state of alarm? "Normality" reasserts itself—but our normality must always be under a shadow.

In other words, is it possible to spend years, perhaps decades, thinking about and working against something so all-encompassing and yet so vague, so much a part of our dreams? (Contrast the nuclear-industrial complex, which pays many people large sums of money to spend their working lives searching for improved means of destruction.) Will we find it easier, if Cold War II should thaw, to relegate the subject once again to the dark side of our minds, where our other demons dwell?

This is not a yes-or-no question. The fear ingrained in our culture can be a paralyzing force as well as an organizing tool, and its effects—to encourage revolt and acquiescence—will be found at work simultaneously in individuals. I'm not trying to be overly pessimistic (what's a little more pessimism, given the situation?), but our movement, if it is to untangle the complexities of the situation, must examine the sickness nuclear weapons have imposed on our culture as well as our politics. In America especially, where there is at present no popular pressure for disarmament, we must unearth these buried dreams and name them, as a step toward facing our public nightmare. *D.G. Green*

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EDITORIALS.

Broken Debate

In an act of retaliation for nothing much in particular, the State Department recently refused to extend the visa of Georgi Arbatov, a Politburo member and the Kremlin's top American affairs expert. Arbatov had been scheduled to appear on Bill Moyers' Journal *last week for a debate. The timing of the visa termination forced Moyers to cancel the debate. The best comment on the entire affair came from Moyers himself, on his program of April 3. We print it below.* —*The Editors*

This program was to have been a primer for a two-hour debate next week between three Americans and three Soviets. My colleagues on the *Journal* and I didn't expect so small an affair to resolve many great questions. But we did think it could prove revealing of the perceptions of both sides toward the new cold war—how we got into it, and how we might get out. There's seldom anything to be lost when people air their differences, especially in an open society accustomed to ideas circulating freely without a government seal of approval. We are after all a nation whose bedrock strength is simply that we're free. Free even to listen to people who neither understand, practice nor believe in freedom. I also have to confess that, as abhorrent as I find Soviet closed society, so abhorrent that I always feel slightly uneasy in the presence of those who benefit from it, I was curious to see how its apologists would react when their premises were subjected to the three Americans, each of whom has a mind of his own and no fear of speaking it. I also happen to believe that it doesn't hurt to keep small avenues of discourse open even during war, hot or cold.

But that debate, as you may have heard, will not come off. Al Haig has refused to allow the senior Soviet official, a member of the Central Committee, who has been in this country for two weeks, to remain another few days to participate. The State Department said that the Secretary's censorship-by-visa is in response to the refusal of the Soviets

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to allow American journalists and officials on Russian television. But that's a disingenuous cover. I don't believe for a minute that an old pro like General Haig really expects the Soviets to offer Americans a forum they deny to their own citizens who dissent from the official view of reality. The Soviets are a closed society. They don't do that kind of thing, because it contains counterrevolutionary possibilities that could not be contained once they've sprouted.

No, General Haig sent the Soviet debater packing for another reason. The State Department has known for at least a month that Georgi Arbatov was to take part in the debate. Coming as it did this late, too late really for Moscow to dispatch a suitable replacement without losing face, the decision was meant to send the Soviets another "We're as tough as you are" message. It was bound to raise Russian hackles, to back them into a corner so that they would find it well-nigh impossible to do anything but withdraw the other contestants once their senior man had been displaced. And that's what happened. The debate is off. It's not the end of the world, of course. We'll be here with a broadcast, all the same. But in miniature, it is a reflection of how the world might one day end. One side takes a step designed to show how tough it can be. The other side, not wanting to be pushed around in public, retaliates in a way that not only makes it difficult for the first party to reconsider its original folly, but requires that folly to be compounded. The second party replies again, in kind, until both sides are now carried along on an escalator of hostility neither can control.

This time it was a mere televised debate—small potatoes—but who knows if next time it might not be small bombs, and then, big ones. That's the brink we're all living on right now, when everything becomes a pawn to Soviet-American rivalry. And it's why one hates to see General Haig and his lieutenants infect every transaction between the two countries—journalistic, cultural, educational, scientific—with the fever of cold war. That happened in the 50s and left a poison in our lives which lingers to this day. No Russian anywhere can say anything to damage this Republic as much as we injure ourselves when we forget who we are, and why.

Culture War II

In the April 6 edition of *The New York Times* appeared a full-page ad with the headline, "We—a group of intellectuals and religious leaders—applaud American policy in El Salvador." The sponsor of the ad was given as The Committee for the Free World, Midge Decter, executive director. But to read the names of the signers of the ad is to experience a sense of *déjà vu*.

The Committee for the Free World is a new international organization formed to combat Soviet totalitarianism and to defend "the values, the achievements and the institutions of Western civilization." A galaxy of 400 intellectuals, artists and scholars from a dozen countries have joined it, including authors Saul Bellow, Herman Wouk, Paddy Chayefsky and Jerzy Kosinski; playwright Eugene Ionesco; columnist Max Lerner; TV commentator Eric Sevareid; columnist and editor R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr., and scholars Bruno Bettelheim, Gershom Scholem and Oscar Handlin. Midge Decter, the writer and wife of *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz, recently resigned as an editor at Basic Books to become executive director of the committee.

Aside from some glittering new names, however, the committee bears a striking resemblance to the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which thrived during the cold war from 1950 to 1966, until it was exposed as a Central Intelligence Agency front by *The New York Times* and other publications. The C.I.A. secretly supported the congress as a means of enlisting intellectuals and opinion makers in a war of ideas against Communism.

An obvious link between the congress and The Committee for the Free World is the fact that the same people are involved. For example, Sidney Hook, the philosopher and author, and Raymond Aron, the French sociologist and political commentator, were delegates to the 1950 Berlin conference that launched the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Hook later served as chairman of its American branch, and Aron was on the international executive committee. Hook is a founding member of The Committee for the Free World, and Aron is its international chairman. Leopold Labedz, who, along with Midge Decter, had the original idea for The Committee for the Free World, was an editor of *Soviet Survey*, which was funded by the congress. Labedz serves as European chairman and head of the London office of the committee. Melvin Lasky, the first general secretary and organizer of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and later an editor of *Encounter*, also subsidized by the congress, is on the committee's board of directors. Irving Kristol, who resigned as executive director of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom in 1953 to become an editor of *Encounter*, is another board member.

Not all who were invited to join the committee accepted, however. For example, Prof. Ralf Dahrendorf, director of the London School of Economics and a prominent sociologist, declined to sign up. Although he had many good friends on the committee, Dahrendorf explained, he thought it strange that people who represented the current political trend to the right and had access to positions of power seemed "so defensive."

Although the Free World committee claims in a press release that "no money will be sought or accepted from any government or government agency," several foundations that provided nearly half its seed money have close ties to the C.I.A. The Smith Richardson Foundation of North Carolina and the Scaife Family Charitable Trusts of Pittsburgh each put up at least $25,000 of the approximately $125,000 initially raised by the committee. The Smith Richardson Foundation, which has C.I.A. officials among its consultants reviewing grants, provides management training to C.I.A. and Defense Department employees through an affiliate. [See Friedman, "Public TV's C.I.A. Show," *The Nation*, July 19-26, 1980.] Richard M. Scaife, a trustee of the Scaife Family Charitable Trusts, was listed as the owner of Forum World Features, a C.I.A.-funded news

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service, according to a 1975 *Washington Post* article.

Convinced that "the struggle for freedom may in the end be won or lost not on battlefields but in books, newspapers, broadcasts and classrooms," according to a press release, the Free World committee plans "to conduct a vigorous battle in the cultural arena." It will sponsor conferences, publications, a speakers' bureau and a monthly bulletin to "monitor" press reports, much as the Congress for Cultural Freedom sponsored conferences and a range of publications to fight the cold war. (In addition to *Soviet Survey* and *Encounter*, the congress subsidized more than ten magazines around the world and scores of books, including, in 1954, *McCarthy and the Communists* by James Rorty and Moshe Decter, former husband of Midge Decter.)

Through organizations like the congress, the Government subsidized editors and scholars who were selected for their correct cold-war positions rather than for their talent or merit, enabling it to rig the free marketplace of ideas. In effect, as Jason Epstein noted in a 1967 *New York Review of Books* article, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, "ostensibly devoted to cultural freedom," as its name implied, was "based upon lies." The formation of The Committee for the Free World, in 1981, revives important issues about the relationship between intellectuals and government. Its advent is a sign that a new cultural cold war is about to erupt, along with a renewed arms race. JOHN S. FRIEDMAN

John S. Friedman is a Washington-based journalist who specializes in the politics of the arts.

Space for Peace

The launching of the Space Shuttle opens up the prospect of the industrialization of space, which could produce major economic returns for the United States and other nations in the areas of communications, manufacturing and energy. Finally, a direct payoff for America's space investment seems at hand.

But despite the vast economic promise of space industrialization, the U.S. civilian space program, under the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, is a victim of neglect. It lacks a clear mission, adequate funding and political support.

In a report released last January, the General Accounting Office warned that unless the United States steps up its commitment to technological leadership in space, other nations will overtake us in ways that will be difficult to overcome. Several countries are already taking a more aggressive posture than the United States, including France, West Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union.

Space industrialization can play a major role in making the U.S. economy as a whole more productive. Were the government to channel funds into research and development activities for a program of space industrialization, technological innovation in the rest of the economy could be stimulated, as the various spinoffs from the Apollo program show.

A second major consequence of space industrialization would be its impact on the U.S. industrial structure. The communications satellite industry is about to undergo enormous change and exponential growth. As a result of these revolutionary changes, there is the possibility for a new industrial sector—the telecommunications industry—to emerge.

Space manufacturing also could have major implications. The virtual lack of gravity in space makes it possible to manufacture a wide array of products, including new optical glass, high-strength permanent magnets, large semiconductor crystals and large-scale integration circuit chips, and organic products like certain enzymes, vaccines, blood cells, nerve cells and hormones. Consequently, a program of space manufacturing could generate growth of two advanced high-technology areas—electronics and biochemicals.

Thus, space industrialization could become an integral part of a national reindustrialization effort. It could stimulate productivity, help restructure the economy, create jobs in new industries and bolster our international trade position.

But this optimistic future is clouded by a growing drive to militarize space. While the civilian space budget has leveled off over the last ten years, the military space budget, under the Department of Defense, has increased, and this trend is likely to accelerate under the Reagan Administration. One of the more ominous developments is the research being done on killer lasers stationed in space.

The challenge ahead is to oppose the militarization of space and in its place work for the establishment of a permanent peaceful presence. The Princeton-based Space Studies Institute, under the innovative leadership of physicist Gerard O'Neill, has developed plans for a basic general-purpose industrial capability in space that could be accomplished at a cost well below the Apollo level, perhaps in the neighborhood of a $6 billion to $8 billion investment. In this scheme, such investment within this decade could result in a partially automated industry that would be capable of producing 100,000 tons of products annually, with a value of more than $10 billion.

Twenty years ago John Kennedy committed our nation to landing a man on the moon in under a decade. Do we have the political will to make an equally important commitment to space industrialization? STEVEN KARGMAN

Steven Kargman, a former intern at The Nation, *is studying at Swarthmore College.*

FORUM ON EL SALVADOR
And U.S. Policy in Central America

Keynote speaker: Carlos Fuentes. Tuesday, April 14, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. Place: New School Auditorium, 66 W. 12th Street, New York City.

Sponsored by the Fund for New Priorities, the New School for Social Research, the North American Congress on Latin America and the Nation Institute.

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UNDERSTATEMENTS.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

In my lost youth I was compelled to study Latin and was, in particular, made to read Julius Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*. So I learned early that history is written chiefly by the victors. But I also learned that Julius Caesar's campaign in Gaul was not the unmixed success that he made it out to be. A sharp-eyed classics teacher helped me to see that many of Caesar's victories were necessitated by previous defeats, and that very often what he claimed as a victory was nothing of the sort. In the end, of course, the Roman eagles and legions withdrew from Gaul "without a shot being fired."

Why, I hear you cry, am I telling you all this? Because a few years ago in London I had an exchange with Gen. Alexander Haig. He was at NATO then, and gave a good sketch of the strategic and political situation on the dreaded "Southern Flank." His argument ran as follows. The United States had screwed up in backing the Portuguese dictatorship, had erred in supporting the Greek dictatorship, had blundered over the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, had miscalculated the pace and rhythm of the Middle East. All this had led to a very dangerous and unstable situation. *Ergo*, the United States should now be given a free hand, without nagging scrutiny from press or public. I rose to say that I didn't think the conclusion really followed from the premises. In fact, I thought it a fair example of a syllogism with what we used to call "an undistributed middle."

Haig did not appreciate this view, any more than Caesar welcomed carping criticism from the appeasement-minded Senate. But his logic appears now to be dominant. *Because* we fouled up in Angola we must be allowed to try again with the same allies. *Because* we miscalculated in El Salvador and Nicaragua we must be allowed a blank check there now. *Because* we've been wrong on every previous prediction of Russian intervention in Poland, we must now redouble our efforts in Europe. Santayana once defined fanaticism as the practice of redoubling your efforts when you have forgotten your aims.

Now, enough has been written about Haig's dreadful performance on camera on that unfateful day of Monday, March 30. And you don't have to read Julius Caesar to conclude that soldiers make deplorable politicians. What strikes me about Haig is what a poor *soldier* he is. His Commander in Chief lies wounded by a maniac, and he flaps and crumbles. His allies express skepticism and he implies that they are disloyal fainthearts. As Shakespeare has it in, funnily enough, *Julius Caesar*, "the fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in *ourselves*." It is a very poor general who seeks a scapegoat for his failures, and only makes a good showing on occasions for which he has been well-rehearsed. Haig's gruesome crackfest in Jerusalem last week, held by some to show a recovery of nerve, simply reeked of the midnight oil.

§ Try this. On March 16, *Time* had the permanently flared nostrils of the aforesaid Haig on its cover. Inside was a profile, written sprawling from a rug's-eye view, of "the intense, self-assured [*sic*] man who is out to stop Soviet expansionism." A key person in shaping this profile was Dean Fischer, who was promptly hired as a State Department and Haig flack. Then, on Wednesday, March 25, there was a story about his appointment in *The Washington Star*, owned by Time Inc. *Star* State Department correspondent David Wood reported Fischer's shining contribution to the profile (which was entitled, by the way, "Taking Command"). For this lapse of taste he has been busted back to the sub-editors' table. Does that kind of thing happen often in America?

§ It is just one year since the election that turned Rhodesia into Zimbabwe. Cast your mind back, if you will, to the time six months before that. The black insurgents who now form the Government were depicted as "terrorists." The fact that they got their weapons from the U.S.S.R. and China was held to prove that they were puppets (a book needs to be written on the art of defining movements by the provenance of their weaponry). An allegedly democratic and "pro-Western" regime was thought to be in control of the country. Bishop Abel Muzorewa, wrote Bayard Rustin in *Commentary*, was "seen as the only nationalist leader capable of unifying the country." Seen by whom? Rustin went on to describe the forces of Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo as "armed by Moscow, hostile to America, antagonistic to democracy and unpopular within Zimbabwe Rhodesia itself."

In the United States today, social democrats propose and conservatives dispose. But at least in Zimbabwe, it has been shown that their shared view of the world is a fantasy. The people of that country voted for the "terrorists" the first chance they got. Muzorewa was lucky to hold his own seat. The Soviet Union and its allies were not invited to the independence ceremonies, and not allowed to open embassies until they had given guarantees of nonintervention. The prisons have been emptied of political detainees. Land reform proceeds apace. Multiracialism likewise. The killing has stopped, and the gross national output has not. In short, the simplistic outlook of the New Right and its "liberal allies" was put to the test before the election of Ronald Reagan, and found grievously wanting. No wonder that Zimbabwe has vanished from the front pages.

Of course, there may yet be some kind of breakdown or failure. But if there is, it will not be for any of the reasons put forward by conservatives. Rather, they want the chance to repeat their mistakes in Namibia and elsewhere. It took the British Government fifteen bloody awful years to realize the truth about its last African dependency, so I'm not trying to be smug about it. But at least we don't have, and don't need, "a Rhodesia syndrome" to distract ourselves from self-criticism and the tough business of learning from experience.

This column will appear biweekly throughout Christopher Hitchens's tour as visiting editor.

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CENTRAL AMERICA WATCH.

In a single week, from March 7 to March 13, 798 people were killed in El Salvador, according to the Archbishop of San Salvador's Legal Aid Commission. Of these, 681 were peasants killed in bombings during assaults by Government planes and helicopter gunships, many of them presumably in the prolonged search-and-destroy missions that have convulsed the departments of Chalatenango and Morazan over the past year. During the second week of March there were no "general offensives" by the guerrillas, or any major battles. Indeed, during that same month, *The New York Times* was applauding the success of the Government's land reform program and reporting that, thanks to the "assurances" President José Napoleón Duarte exacted from the military on the curbing of repression, "the number of right-wing assassinations is dropping." As the actual death rate continues to rise, the U.S. "peacetime" military assistance to El Salvador may ultimately contribute to more than 40,000 deaths in that country. It should be pointed out that U.S. and Salvadoran Government estimates of the total number of guerrillas have never exceeded 10,000, and the number of armed and trained guerrillas has been consistently placed between 3,000 and 5,000 since the October 1980 coup. In those eighteen months more than 20,000 people have died.

■ **Such numbers fail to show up in the "big picture" in Washington. While Pentagon militarists and State Department "pacificationists" continue to slug it out within the Administration, Congress seems to treat El Salvador as the crucial test of loyalty to the President. On the one hand, aides on the Hill are shocked by the unprecedented volume of constituent mail opposing military aid to El Salvador, and many legislators have had a hard time buying the new Haig Doctrine of Soviet expansionism. On the other hand, it was difficult enough to slow down the Reagan bandwagon in Congress a few weeks ago; sympathy generated by the March 30 assassination attempt may make it impossible.**

The last key Congressional vote came after the State Department announced on March 25 that an additional $63.4 million in emergency economic aid would be sent to El Salvador. The money would be drawn out of funds earmarked for Israel and Egypt, a move that State Department spokesman William Dyess described as "robbing Peter to pay Paul." Across town at about the same time the State Department announced the economic aid package, the House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations was meeting to consider $5 million in military aid. The committee voted 8 to 7 in favor of the aid, which represents a modest increment to some $30 million that has already flowed to El Salvador since January. Only two Democrats broke ranks in the partisan voting by joining Republicans in what was called a show of "support for the new President." They were Charles Wilson of Texas, a quondam supporter of Gen. Anastasio Somoza, and committee chairman Jamie Whitten from Mississippi, who was brought in at the last minute to cast the deciding vote in favor of the aid.

Beneath the surface, however, there was much maneuvering going on between the White House and the Hill. Subcommittee chairman Clarence Long, a Maryland Democrat, had just returned from El Salvador determined not to endorse a "Gulf of Tonkin resolution to legitimize intervention." In a token gesture, he offered an amendment barring the use of any of the appropriation in support of the fifty-six U.S. military advisers currently stationed in El Salvador. And indeed, $300,000 of the package had been earmarked for "training" by the advisers. The Reagan Administration caught wind of Long's proposal, and carefully maneuvered beforehand to prevent the development of any snags in its El Salvador policy. On the eve of the vote, Long received a State Department "advisory" that the $300,000 for training had been deleted.

The Administration's heavyhanded El Salvador policy did stir some formerly supportive Democrats into opposition. Almost a year ago to the day, Long's same subcommittee had met to approve a Carter Administration request for $5.7 million in "nonlethal" assistance. Democrats David Obey of Wisconsin and Matt McHugh of New York, whose willingness to "take a chance" on Carter policy on El Salvador proved crucial in that vote, opposed the second round of aid proposed by Reagan. "Defining policy as a confrontation between East and West, Communism and freedom, the Soviet Union and the United States is nonsense," said McHugh. "This is not the fundamental problem in El Salvador."

■ The only organized Congressional opposition has been a bill introduced by Massachusetts Democrat Gerry Studds. The bill, which would end military aid to El Salvador, was a direct result of what Studds learned during a fact-finding mission to El Salvador several months ago. Its seventy-three sponsors included Melvin Price, an Illinois Democrat and the archconservative chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and Gus Yatron, deposed chairman of the House Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs. While the bill has virtually no hope of passage, it did pick up twenty sponsors in the course of a single week in March. But then again, 681 Salvadorans died in that same week, and the toll will mount as long as U.S. military aid continues.

The questions of repression, reforms and military aid could ostensibly be resolved through a negotiated settlement, and President Duarte, the leadership of the opposition front and the Archbishop of San Salvador have all expressed willingness to initiate negotiations immediately. But the Reagan Administration has effectively blocked mediation by publicly denying the opposition front's statements, and the Salvadoran military provided a further obstacle by publishing an enemies list in San Salvador last week. The list names 138 prominent members of business, church, academic and even current Salvadoran Government circles as well as self-proclaimed guerrilla leaders, thus blacklisting every known moderate inside or outside the country who could join in a mediation effort with any credibility.

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ITEM. ITEM. ITEM.

■ **With the help of *Nation* intern Trisha Thompson, we recently monitored the photographs on page 1 of *The New York Times* from February 6 through March 20. During that six-week period (forty-two papers), American public officials adorned the front page seventy-three times. That is a lot of establishment portraiture. President Reagan made the front page eighteen times, and two of his principal capos didn't do badly either: Alexander Haig (four) and David Stockman (five). On a really busy official day, like March 19, you could see, upper left, Jimmy Carter (ex-establishment) at Princeton University (establishment) with a smiling coed; Haig, upper right, peering over his bifocals at a House Foreign Affairs Committee seminar on the Soviet threat to world peace, and, below center, a black child (nonestablishment) clambering over Nancy Reagan (consort).**

Of course, some anti-establishment types appeared from time to time: coal miners picketing in front of the White House, nuclear protesters at a West German power plant. And there were occasional crisis pix from Poland and El Salvador, plus memorable fires and explosions. True inspiration surfaced once or twice—for example, the picture of a newly discovered Mozart symphony. But it is the Emperor Joseph IIs of this world, not the Mozarts, who really fascinate the courtiers at *The Times*.

On February 28, page 1 depicted Reagan accepting a gift from Secretary of the Interior James Watt—a book of Federal regulations split in two with a meat cleaver. Stockman and Treasury Secretary Donald Regan share the general hilarity. *The Times* confirms that inflation is our number-one problem; these days a picture is only worth about 724 words—if that.

■ *The Times* did have a short recap of it, but generally the conference of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War was poorly reported. One would think it an occasion of some significance nowadays when the United States and the Soviet Union agree on anything, as doctors from the two countries did on the statement: "Nuclear war would be the ultimate human and environmental disaster." Joining them in the declaration were medics from ten countries. The meeting, held in Airlie, Virginia, last month, was the outgrowth of an agreement between prominent Russian and U.S. physicians in Geneva last year (reports veteran *Nation* contributor Charles Flato), which called for a mobilization of the medical profession against nuclear war. The conference even had the blessing of former President Carter and Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev. Reagan's White House physician sent his regrets.

The medical problems of an all-out nuclear war between the superpowers would be insoluble, the doctors concluded, with 80 percent of all physicians killed, 80 percent of all hospital beds destroyed, a massive shortage of drugs to ease pain, blood plasma, antibiotics and other medicines. Destruction of 80 percent of the ozone layer would produce widespread blindness and death; civil defense would be ineffectual; and survivors would face the lifelong threat of contracting leukemia and other cancers. Psychiatrists warned against psychological mechanisms that are working to numb humanity to the implications of nuclear war. Dr. Robert Jay Lifton of Yale University summed up the conference's message: "We doctors want to say to the political leaders that if there is nuclear war, do not expect us to be able to patch up your wounds, physical or psychological." In other words, "Politician, heal thyself."

■ **Another group of public-minded physicians has uncovered a new, darker meaning to the expression, "Blood will tell." People in El Salvador are afraid to donate blood, it seems, because it might be used to treat someone the military has decided is opposed to the junta. This was just one example of the total politicization of medical care in that war-torn nation cited in a study made by the Public Health Commission to El Salvador, an investigative body organized by the Committee for Health Rights in El Salvador in cooperation with the American Public Health Association, The Physicians Forum and the American Friends Service Committee. According to *Nation* intern JoAnn Wypijewski, the commission reported that health workers are "afraid to render services to patients who are, or could conceivably be considered, 'oppositionists.'" Doctors, nurses and even medical students have been murdered. The security forces sweep through hospitals in search of "oppositionists," whom they sometimes kill on the spot. The Government and right-wing groups also plant spies in hospitals, who finger opponents of the regime. By design, the medical terrorism has made health workers wary about whom they treat; Red Cross ambulance drivers are warned for their own protection not to pick up casualties. Doctors are fleeing the country, but nothing is said about sending in American *medical* advisers.**

■ Obviously concerned about the flak political pollsters drew after the last election for not predicting the Reagan landslide, one of the brotherhood has developed a technique for nabbing those tricky voters who traduce honest pollsters by changing their minds. As you may recall, "volatility" was the pollsters' catchphrase to explain the phenomenon. Now the firm of Yankelovich, Skelly and White has come up with "a new Index enabling opinion survey researchers to measure the volatility—or 'mushiness'—of the public's opinion on public policy issues." Says Arthur White, vice chairman of the polling outfit: "We need to know when a figure citing 60 percent public approval on an issue means that that percentage has truly decided in favor of a particular policy alternative, or when the approval means mere lip service." As an example of past lip service, White cites the supposed majority who opposed the Panama Canal treaty. Actually, inside they were all mush. This makes us worry about those pols who are slaves to the polls. How can they take a stand on an issue that has a 50 percent mushiness rating? Will it be a case of the mushier leading the mushiest?

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ARTICLES.

REAGAN'S ENERGY PROGRAM

A Give-Back For Big Oil

ROBERT ENGLER

The press heralded the no-nonsense take-charge style of the new Administration in moving to revive the troubled economy. But a reading of the budget prescriptions in *America's New Beginning: A Program for Economic Recovery* and the Office of Management and Budget's working papers (the "Stockman hit list") which preceded this revised budget gives scant assurance of the cure's effectiveness—let alone its fairness.

The provisions relating to energy policy suggest how little has been learned from the experiences of the past decade. Many of the supposedly hard-nosed conclusions about the domestic economy are actually ideological conjecture tending to solidify corporate rule over energy. The international dimensions are based on dangerous geopolitics that posits American global domination. An unabashed paean to the profit system and to those skilled in tightening the belts of others, the Reagan blueprint reflects a deliberate innocence as to how energy is actually managed and who pays what for its costs. The consequence of its bold steps backward is a meanness toward the growing number of citizens who neither share nor can anticipate sharing appreciably in the benefits of the economy. The perverted priorities of the budget presage regional and mass social explosions at home and military confrontations abroad.

Candidate Reagan identified government as the problem rather than the solution. Its meddling in the marketplace had brought on our energy crises, he said. His pledge to turn private enterprise loose evoked images of oil and coal operators drilling and digging with liberated abandon to insure abundance for the American way of consumption. But the race to lift the burden of public government is not accompanied by any recognition, let alone lessening, of the burden of corporate government upon consumers and taxpayers.

To the contrary, controls on the price of oil from "old wells," already slated to be removed later this year, are to be lifted now. All oil prices are to be brought up to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries level. The remaining administrative ceilings on natural gas, long since weakened in response to industry pressures, are also viewed as obstacles to economic revitalization. The major constraint upon their immediate phasing out is recognition that gas prices and profits will rocket out of sight, carrying with them much of the popular support for an illusory free market—and conceivably the Republican Party's voting base.

The assumption has been that high prices would send the clearest nonbureaucratic "conserve" signal to consumers. While the captains of energy are to have their confidence restored through the removal of controls, the profligate citizen is to be taught through his wallet that his wanton desires must be brought under control. National energy consumption has been dropping perceptibly. Yet prices continue to spiral. Heating fuel costs have risen at least 25 percent since the election, and gasoline prices have gone up about 20 percent—far beyond the increase the Administration predicted would result from decontrol. Scant attention is paid to the regressive impact upon different sectors of the population. To those whose limousines clog mid-Manhattan, $2 gasoline will just make it easier for their chauffeurs to find a parking space. For the growing number of people who find that energy costs (built into almost every purchase) are already taking more than 25 percent of their disposable income, cutting back is most likely to be on food and health care.

The case for higher prices has been based on the twin assumptions that there is a shortage of energy and that the industry needs more incentives to end it. The new profits would provide the necessary investment encouragement, just as the removal of governmental restraints would offer "psychological" reassurance. Obviously, no one in the Administration has been reading the trade journals reporting gluts in the oil market. Nor is there any analysis of the present capital resources of the energy industry and how this capital is allocated. More than 40 percent of all manufacturing profits in the United States go to the oil corporations. They occupy six of the top ten positions (by assets) among all industrial enterprises. Exxon's net profits for 1980 were $5.7 billion on revenues of $110 billion, an increase of 32 percent over the previous year.

The soaring prices of the past decade have not led to any significant new production in oil and gas. The oil companies have interpreted their needs and stockholder obligations as requiring attractive investment opportunities for this tremendous capital. These are not necessarily found in drilling more wells or building new refineries. Nor do their growth policies suggest that their primary mission is to fight unemployment or revive deteriorating regions. Instead, they are moving to take over other forms of energy and to expand in nonenergy arenas of the world economy. (Last month Standard Oil of California offered $4 billion to buy the 50 percent of the Amax mining corporation it does not already own; Standard Oil (Ohio) bid $1.7 billion for Kennecott Copper and Gulf moved to buy the Kemmerer Coal Company.) Their control over the price of energy enables the corporations to generate most of their capital internally.

Robert Engler, author of The Politics of Oil *(University of Chicago Press) and of* The Brotherhood of Oil *(Chicago and Mentor), is editor of the newly published* America's Energy: Reports From "The Nation" on 100 Years of Struggles for the Democratic Control of Our Resources *(Pantheon). He teaches at the City University of New York.*

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Thus, American consumers are their chief investors, but they have little control over how the money is spent.

That control will be reduced even further under the new budget. Antitrust and divestiture measures, never the most successful of instruments against market domination, are to be phased out. The Federal Trade Commission, for example, which since 1973 has been painstakingly constructing a monopoly suit against Big Oil, has been notified by the O.M.B. that its budget is to be halved. If Congress approves the cut, most F.T.C. antitrust activities will end within a few years. The industry's ability to keep supply down and prices up will go unchallenged—a condition known as the free market in Reaganspeak.

With the removal of Federal controls over the allocation of oil, refineries and parts of the country whose limited purchases are of diminishing interest to the major suppliers will have difficulty in finding dependable alternative sources. Small gasoline stations and their dealer-mechanics will become increasingly rare along the highways as the big oil companies cut back their number "to restore market forces." [See Fred J. Cook, "Big Oil Steps on the Independent Gas Dealers," *The Nation*, January 17.]

The Department of Energy, even though it has been a most loyal and faithful servant to the oil and aerospace industries, is targeted for abolition. Immediate reductions in its budget will affect its information-gathering, environmental-effects research and regulatory functions. The department's conservation programs are to be cut back since individuals and businesses "are already making substantial conservation efforts . . . which will be accelerated by oil and gas decontrol." The development and implementation of building and appliance energy consumption standards are to be eliminated.

A recent investigation by a subcommittee of the House of Representatives concluded that the department has been quite lax in ascertaining that a substantial amount of "old oil"—oil still under control—has been "miscertified" (a D.O.E. term) and sold at the much higher price allowed "stripper" oil. The cost to the consumer was placed at $1 billion in 1979 and as much in the first half of 1980. "We used to call that cheating," commented chairman Bob Eckhardt of Texas, since defeated.

Public financing for the development of renewable alternative energy such as solar and geothermal, already meager, is to be cut sharply. The Solar Energy and Energy Conservation Bank is to be eliminated even before it gets under way. Government loans for alcohol fuels and biomass technology will be stopped so as not to "overstimulate production and adversely affect food prices." The familiar ideological justification for this is that the market should determine the entry of new technologies and enterprises, but the effect is an unconditional surrender to the energy industry's timetable for introducing new supplies and forms. As always, the prime consideration is the maintenance of price and market domination by Big Oil.

To preserve the appearance of evenhandedness, Energy Department funding of private demonstration plants for synthetic fuels is to be reduced. But this move may turn out to be bureaucratic sleight of hand, for the energy corporations will continue to receive United States Synthetic Fuels Corporation loan guarantees, scaled down somewhat, for synfuel projects.

Nuclear energy, meanwhile, receives a new lease on life. Its development is to go forward, with projected increases in Federal subsidies and a speeding up of the licensing process for generating electricity. Little concern is voiced for the high economic costs certain to be borne by consumers who pay for the construction as well as the energy. The unresolved questions about community safety and environmental degradation are played down.

Workers in the energy industry are not to be assured any lease on life. Black lung compensation for miners is to be scrutinized and reduced so as to preclude "welfare payments for those not truly medically disabled." There are to be further cutbacks in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's review of industrial safety conditions. The hard-earned progress toward a more livable workplace is thus to be reversed and the costs of health and safety are shifted back to the coal miners and refinery workers. Their communities are to serve as energy colonies of a revitalized America. Their faith in capitalism apparently does not require any shoring up.

Compassion for the poor and the near-poor who are unable to pay high energy costs is severely rationed in the new budget. There are cutbacks in funds for helping them meet inflated energy bills. Such aid is imperative for short-term relief in getting through a hard winter, however dubious it is as long-run policy, since in effect these payments are disguised supports for energy corporation pricing. O.M.B. recommendations would destroy the Community Services Administration, successor to the Office of Economic Opportunity, which has been an effective champion of low-income people and community energy self-reliance. Most appropriations that previously went to the C.S.A. for weatherization (which creates local employment), appropriate technology development and community participation would be consolidated into a block grant from the Department of Health and Human Services to be given to the states for use as they see fit. Funding would be cut to 75 percent to reflect lowered administrative costs. As a result, the C.S.A. will very likely be allowed to expire.

There is little in the proposed budget that is supportive of genuine conservation of energy resources. And there is less that redirects capital, private or public, into areas that might ultimately generate energy efficiency and savings. To do this would be to infringe upon corporate freedom to produce only what is most profitable. Chrysler is still helped to build cars, despite market signals that consumers can't or won't purchase them. No terms are set as a condition of continued loans for more socially desirable production—as for example, buses that run.

Mass transit aid is to be slashed, thus subsidizing the auto industry and continuing a major source of energy waste. Capital grants for urban mass-transit construction are to be

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viewed skeptically and car-pooling is proposed as a less capital-intensive alternative. "Improvements in intercity highways and widespread availability of air travel since 1960 have, in effect, eliminated the need for and utility of railroads," the O.M.B. concludes. "While part of the country's heritage and history, . . . [they] . . . have little place in a Federal budget which is heavily in deficit." Each Amtrak train must meet stringent tests of operating cost effectiveness. Fares are to be increased sharply, subsidies slashed and marginal services chopped. "With the President's decontrol of gas and fuel prices, the cost of driving or flying will increase. Thus, Amtrak passengers are less likely to object to paying higher fares."

Many may have difficulty in noting any dramatic change from Carter days (save perhaps in the de-emphasis upon conservation) in public policy or in the impact upon their family budgets. But fleecing of the public by private enterprise is now elevated into high principle as well as practice. Gone is the lip service to Populism. Formerly, corporate manipulation took place mostly backstage—although admittedly the curtain was quite transparent, as for example, industry advisory committees, consultants and personnel from regulated industries controlling the work of nominally public agencies. Now it is to be in the open.

No ambiguity or conflict between development and stewardship are to hamper the efforts of the Department of the Interior. The public domain, comprising one-third of the nation's land area and containing perhaps one-half of its remaining fossil fuels, is to be a supermarket for private leasing under this agency's sympathetic eye. The potential for genuine competition or for public development of energy on a timetable in harmony with the national interest is abdicated. This mortgaging of the nation's future becomes a subsidy of incalculable worth to private enterprise.

Domestically, this abdication of responsibility for shaping the national economy promises neither jobs nor lower prices. It does nothing to insure increased productivity in socially needed sectors. The assumption that the tax cuts will emerge as new investment is prayer rather than informed prediction. Reagan's highly selective loyalty to what is called laissez-faire may be a blow to Republican prospects for a lengthy reign. And the preoccupation of Democratic stalwarts with their party wounds and their narrow constituencies further reduces public debate over energy alternatives. Cumulatively, however, the real loss is the opportunity for the American people to use all their resources, including the much-maligned government, to create an energy-efficient and ecologically sane economy.

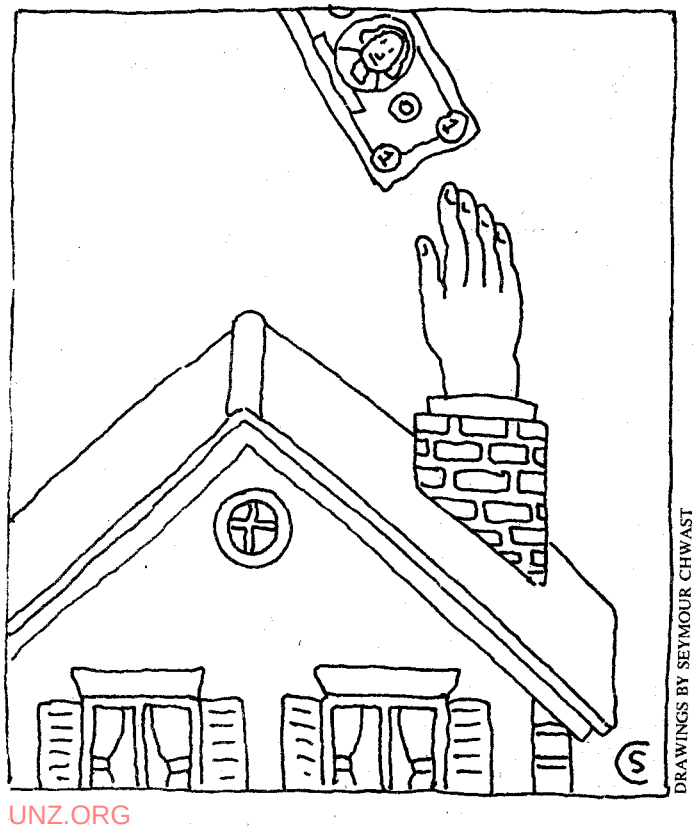
Most frightening for the survival of all is the dependence upon military solutions. The economic and social costs of an intensified arms race are placed in a politically untouchable category of national imperative. No concern is shown about the burdens of military government upon the public, whether in taxes, inflation, energy waste or distorted production, or about young men asked to invest their lives. Instead, the dubious claim is advanced that restoring America to its number-one position militarily is essential for economic renewal.

All this bomb rattling is based on the assumption that the world [including the Caribbean and the Persian Gulf] is an American energy reservoir. Yet nuclear weapons will not secure oil fields or protect supply lines any more than conventional arms over the long run will reduce vulnerability to producer-nation cutoffs. Instead, they accelerate the drift toward a garrison state isolated from global sympathy and from the confidence of its own citizenry.

The Reagan budget is a buckshot instrument for guarding privilege in the name of national well-being and security. It holds out to the taxpayer and consumer the increasingly elusive grail of "more" as the familiar diversion from the goal of building a just political economy accountable to the people and sensitive to the rights of the rest of the human race.

The President's insistence that the taxing power must not be used to regulate the economy or bring about social change throws down the gauntlet for a battle on fundamentals. There is no way to avoid his meaning: the political process is not to be employed by the American people to reconstruct their society in democratic directions.

For critics, his budget should exorcise the allures of soft and sunny paths inviting barefoot entry into the promised land of decentralized energy and government. It underscores the urgency for ending the acceptance of energy as a commodity, vulnerable to the profit collaboration of the international corporations and overseas producers. [See Engler, "Letting Big Oil Do It," *The Nation*, October 25, 1980.] Energy policy must be placed within the framework of a democratically planned economy whose budget is the product of public debate and control. This might be the beginning of a genuine economic reconstruction in which renewable fuels, manageable technologies and ecological



DRAWINGS BY SEYMOUR CHWAST

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principles are significant components. Such alternatives cannot bypass the need for a sustained political challenge to military Keynesianism and to corporate control over energy and investment, which can come about only when enough people mobilize the political will to do so. □

ISRAELI ELECTIONS

Labor or Likud—Will It Make Any Difference?

DANIEL AMIT

Jerusalem

By all indications, the parliamentary elections here on June 30 will result in an overwhelming victory for the Labor Party of Shimon Peres. The United States has already written off Menachem Begin's Government, and the Camp David talks have been put on hold until the political dust settles in Israel. (The intervention of Moshe Dayan and his Pelem—Movement of National Renewal—is unlikely to alter the electoral picture very greatly, though it is more of an embarrassment to Labor than to the Likud. Dayan's formulation of "unilateral autonomy" for the West Bank, halfway between the settlers, the Camp David accords and the Peres "Jordanian solution," is only another muddying of the waters, and would leave the status quo relatively untouched.) Given the present hiatus, any comment on the workings of the Begin Government seems superfluous, yet its frantic activity continues—fending off political scandals and pursuing economic policies that fuel a smoldering domestic unrest. Even more dangerous are the steps it is taking to consolidate the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

There is a widely held belief that a Labor government would turn these policies around—that the party is more "moderate" and "reasonable" on the issues of Israeli settlements and Palestine autonomy. This view is widespread both in Israel and abroad.

But the "reasonable" image Labor has acquired flies in the face of its history. In the past, Labor spurned many peace initiatives. It was under Golda Meir that the highly provocative settlement of Kiryat Arba in Hebron was established, as well as scores of other settlements, including those of the extremist Gush Emunim (Movement of the Faithful). [See Arthur H. Samuelson, "This Land Is Our Land," *The Nation*, December 8, 1979.] Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Zipory was correct when, in a speech in the Knesset defending the Begin Government's policies against a censure motion, he pointed out that under the Labor Government there were more expulsions, more violence and more houses destroyed in the occupied lands than under Begin. Moreover, during the debate on the Camp David agreements, Labor loudly condemned the evacuation of the settlements in the Rafah Approaches—as well it might since it put these settlements there in the first place.

Despite this record, Israelis who should know better turn to Labor—especially a wide range of intellectuals, whom the party continues to seduce and disappoint again and again. As a result, the Labor Party monopolizes the opposition ground. The myth is perpetuated that there are meaningful policy differences between it and Begin's Likud Party on the future of the occupied territories, and alternative ideas, which might offer real hope for peace, are never heard. For Labor is in fundamental agreement with the Likud Party and thus as much an obstacle to peace as is Begin. It is a myth that Labor has the key to solving Israel's problems, both foreign and domestic, for so long as there is no peace, there can be no remedies for rampaging inflation and corruption at home.

What are those central issues on which Labor and Likud agree? Briefly, that Israel is an island of Western civilization in a sea of backward, inferior and incomprehensible Arabs. Israel's existence in the region is a matter of right, but the other inhabitants immorally refuse to admit this and remain hostile. Hence, the fundamental rules of international conduct—the right of self-determination, respect for the other party's accepted representatives, mutual recognition—do not apply to Israel. There is no inkling of the threat to Israel's moral and intellectual integrity in the continued debate over the "final solution" for another people, the Palestinians. It is legitimate to appropriate their land and water. It is legitimate to take territory from them by war, and establish settlements on such territory, whether the original occupants are Palestinian or Syrian. It was no accident that both Likud and Labor voted for the annexation of Jerusalem and were also in agreement on the desirability of a similar law concerning the Golan Heights. The Labor-Likud consensus is, in fact, much wider and includes their attitude toward the Israeli Arabs.

A second effect of Labor's erroneous reputation for moderation is that extreme nationalist groups view it as a threat to their goal of expansion. Foremost among these are the settlers on the West Bank and Gaza, who are becoming an Israeli version of the French *pieds noirs* in Algeria. Next come their "metropolitan" supporters: the proto-fascist Hatchia, Gush Emunim, Begin's Heruths, Ariel Sharon's followers, factions of the National Religious Party and others. "A government that will dismantle settlements will not survive; 200,000 Israelis will demonstrate if Labor ever returns part of the West Bank to Jordan," Agriculture Minister Sharon told a group of British Conservative M.P.s.

No doubt there is some justification for the settlers' concern. As Prime Minister, Peres may, in a move to appease the United States, propose to return a part of the West Bank to King Hussein. Even though by all indications Jordan is hostile to such an idea, Labor, including its intellectuals, keeps it alive. The plan is to hand over to Jordan the most populated part of the West Bank as an enclave. All Israeli

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settlements will remain, however, as well as its military dominance and control of the area's water supply. Jordan is envisioned as taking over Israel's role of applying the repression necessary to insure Palestinian passivity. No wonder Jordan shows no interest in the scheme.

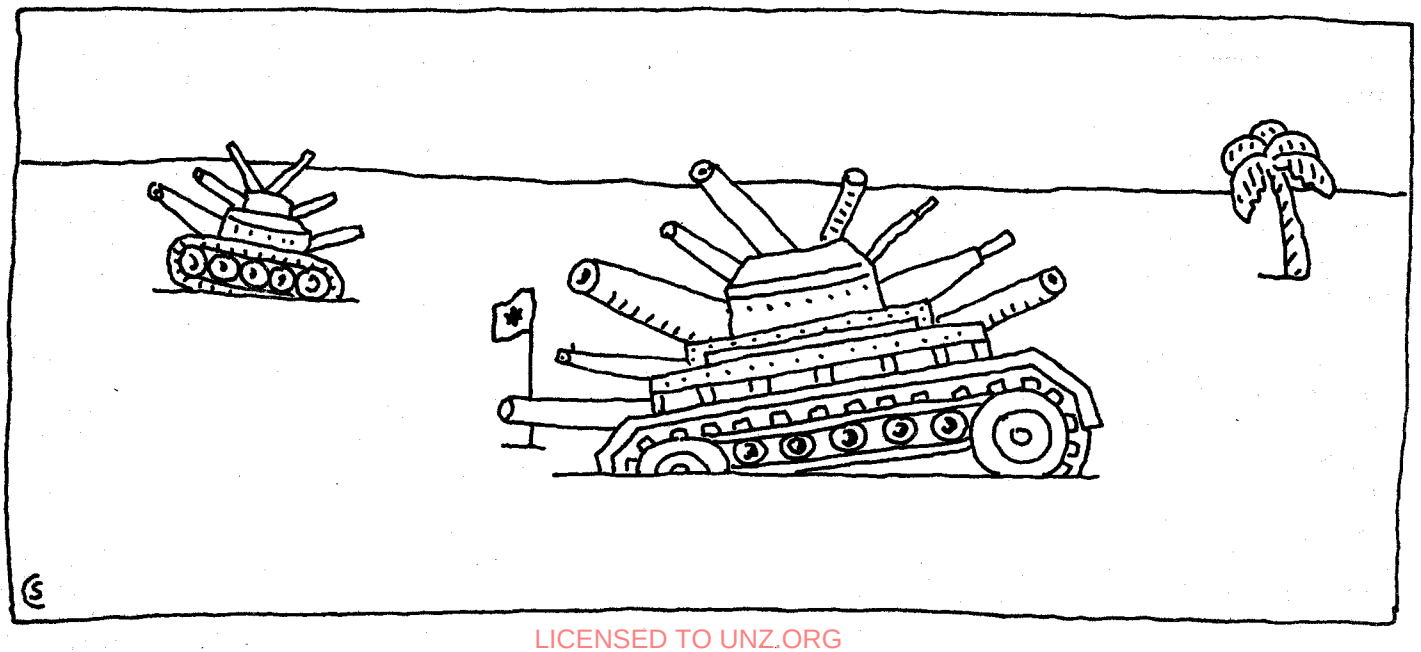
But the settlers and their supporters remain convinced that Jordan or some other outside power will come in, and they are getting ready for that day. They fear that in some parts of the West Bank they may have difficulties in grabbing more land for establishing new settlements, or for expanding the existing ones—that some military presence (Jordanian police?) will stop them. At present, under the protection of the Israeli military, they move about with impunity. They take the law into their own hands—provoke the population and punish it. Any sign of readiness to compromise with the Palestinians is seen as a setback to the goal of annexing the entire territory for Israel. This would be preceded by a significant depletion of the indigenous population, which is achieved by provocation and violence.

Such a goal is only discussed in private among high officials. No government, Begin's included, could muster a majority in the Knesset to endorse it. The present Government's failure openly to espouse such a policy is a source of recurrent friction between it and the settlers. Nonetheless, at all levels of government, including the Cabinet and the military hierarchy, there are people who support it openly and actively, including such top officials as Agriculture Minister Sharon; Transportation Minister Chaim Landau; Education and Culture Minister Zevulun Hurvitz; the co-chairman of the Settlements Department of the Jewish Agency, Matityahou Drobless; Chief of Staff Raphael Eitan; the commander of the West Bank, Gen. Dan Matt, and many more.

The supporters of the grand scheme of annexation are doing everything within their power—overtly and covertly—to create a power base in the West Bank of 15,000 to 20,000 settlers, which would be able to resist any moves by a new Labor government, or any future progress in the autonomy negotiations. Sharon and Drobless said this in so many words recently, but the plan was put in motion when Begin and Sharon came to power, and an economic, military and administrative buildup in the area was launched for the purpose of creating a solid infrastructure. An idea of the scope of this effort came out after the Government announced an allocation of $140 million for the settlements in the 1980 budget. Closer scrutiny of the budget by a writer for *Ha'aretz* revealed that the amount was really at least $520 million, or $30,000 per settler. The settlements have become military strongholds, heavily armed. Their residents have been integrated into the regional military command, enabling them to carry out training and stockpiling, with access to the military's logistical and communications systems.

The policy of making the settlers self-sufficient with tacit official backing is reminiscent of the behavior of British governments prior to the Rhodesian secession. The secession was not exactly the objective of all British politicians, not even of all Conservatives. But the logic of the situation was inexorable. The same logic is operating in the West Bank. Summarizing a scholarly symposium held at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem, Yehuda Litani writes, "Whoever believes that it will be possible to evacuate settlements from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip . . . even by the military—is ignoring the atmosphere in which these settlements live."

The infrastructure, finances and arms, combined with legitimizing rhetoric, gives a very strong sense of purpose to a very aggressive minority. Rightly or wrongly frightened by Labor, or by autonomy, the settlers are very likely to declare their own rule in the West Bank. The administrative structures have already been established. It is quite likely this usurpation of power by the settlers will be called "the extension of Israeli law to historical Eretz Israel [Greater Israel]." It will be presented as an annexation rather than separation but the substance will remain the same. As the British Government did when Ian Smith announced the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, the new government will quite probably dissociate itself from unilateral annexation, but there will be little it can do to stop it.



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In the first place, the Labor Party is itself divided on the issue, and many of its senior politicians support the Greater Israel movement. Second, given that the settlements have been turned into fortresses hostile to Labor, the only way of putting down the rebellion is by eliminating the settlements, all of them, either by military action or economic strangulation. The first is virtually impossible, for reasons Litani makes clear. It is difficult to believe that a force of the required size and reliability can be assembled. The existence and well-being of the settlements are widely supported by the people of Israel. The settlement movement has never been officially challenged by Labor. Consequently, there is no reason to doubt that Sharon's promised 200,000 demonstrators would turn out. Furthermore, to attack the settlements openly in the absence of a peace agreement would be clearly conceived as political suicide. An economic campaign against this mini-Rhodesia would have even less success than did the United Nations sanctions on Rhodesia. In fact the proximity of the motherland would make circumventing the embargo quite easy. Moreover, one can foresee great enthusiasm for the settlers' cause here in Israel and abroad, and outpourings of aid to the besieged. Many may find such a movement inspiring in contrast to the present quagmire in which Israel is stuck.

If this scenario does indeed come to pass, one can only speculate about its outcome. Should one expect a withering away of the secessionist adventure—as happened in Rhodesia? Perhaps. But even though precedent in Zimbabwe gives reason for optimism, the effects of the ugly heritage of the white minority's rule there have not fully emerged. Similar threats hang over the West Bank and Gaza. □

WORKERS PARTY ON TRIAL

The Big NASSCO Bomb-Scare Case

LARRY REMER

San Diego

Wearing hard hats, their tools slung from their belts, the workers filed quietly into the sanctuary at St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church. Black armbands fluttering in the wind, 2,000 co-workers had come to pay their last respects to Michael Bebbe, 22, a welder at the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company (NASSCO) yard in San Diego who found death waiting below decks one September afternoon. Bebbe and Kenneth King, 24, had slipped into a tank aboard the destroyer tender *Cape Cod* for a work break, only to be overcome by argon gas leaking from storage tanks deep inside the ship's hold. Their bodies were found several hours later.

Larry Remer is the editor of San Diego Newsline.

This moment of quiet in solidarity for the dead Bebbe was not the first time this past summer that the NASSCO yard had stood silent. Just five weeks earlier, Iron Workers Local 627 (which represents about half of NASSCO's 6,000-member work force) had shut the yard down in a four-day wildcat strike to protest unsafe working conditions. Led by a left-leaning activist leadership which had been swept into office three years earlier following five on-the-job worker deaths, the Iron Workers local had repeatedly clashed with NASSCO management over the need for an aggressive worker-safety program.

Shortly after Bebbe and King were buried, three Iron Workers activists were arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and charged with conspiracy to blow up power transformers leading to the shipyard. As evidence, the Bureau produced an informant named Ramon Barton, who, publicly at least, had been a union militant. Barton charged that the strike leadership and two of the alleged bomb plotters belonged to the Communist Workers Party (C.W.P.). The accused—David Boyd, 32, Rodney Johnson, 22, and Mark Loo, 29—and their supporters promptly denounced the arrests as "a company frame-up"—a charge NASSCO dismissed as "ridiculous." The trial is to begin in U.S. District Court in San Diego on April 28.

In the wake of Barton's charges, the union's international leadership demanded that the local purge all C.W.P. members and sympathizers—or at least those people thought to be C.W.P. sympathizers—from positions of power within the union; Local 627's business agent Reynaldo (Cherokee) Inchaurregui fired the union's special organizer Miguel Salas, a firebrand activist who had been Inchaurregui's ally during the upsurge that won activist control of the local three years earlier. Though Salas vehemently denied membership in the C.W.P., he had emerged, during the wildcat strike, as a leader of the most militant faction of the Iron Workers. Following his firing, Salas announced his candidacy for business agent in the local's regular election slated for last December. Heading a ticket called the Strongback Slate—the name comes from a tool used in the shipyards to straighten steel before welding—Salas won the election over four other candidates. Thereafter the International slapped the local into trusteeship—a move that Salas is fighting in court.

All the events leading to the suit have been denounced by Salas and the activists in the union as a plot by NASSCO, the F.B.I. and the International to break the back of the San Diego local. Party members went even further, declaring that the F.B.I. was acting covertly to destroy the C.W.P. NASSCO and Justice Department spokesmen dismissed the charges as "ludicrous."

Even so, testimony in pretrial discovery proceedings in the prosecution of the three alleged bomb plotters suggests that Barton may have informed to both the company and the police. Moreover, a suit brought by union lawyers alleges a deliberate union-busting campaign by NASSCO officials during the months surrounding these incidents. Added to all that is testimony of collaboration between NASSCO and the intelligence detail of the local police, a

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systematic pattern of police and F.B.I. surveillance of Iron Workers activists that predates the wildcat strike, and evidence that Barton may have acted as an *agent provocateur*, soliciting violence, manipulating events and targeting activist leaders for possible arrest.

Two of these leaders were Miguel Salas and Frank Holowach. A former United Farm Workers organizer, Salas is a tireless activist. Holowach, who is quieter, is an effective tactician and strategist. The evidence released thus far, argues the defense, indicates that Barton was instructed several times to get close to Salas and Holowach and, as the purported bomb plot unfolded, to try to implicate them in it. According to the affidavit filed by Barton at the time of the arrests, the police monitored him closely as he met with the principals, utilizing the most sophisticated electronic surveillance equipment. According to lawyers for the defense, tapes they had obtained from the government through the pretrial discovery process show that on one occasion, Barton called both Salas and Holowach on a tapped phone and made thinly veiled efforts to entice the two to commit sabotage. Defense lawyers also claim that these tapes will show that during a visit to Holowach's home and on a fishing trip with Salas, Barton repeatedly tried to enter into discussions about acts of violence and sabotage.

For Holowach, the game of cops and activists had a familiar ring. A veteran of the local antiwar movement, he had followed other San Diego activists with Marxist leanings into the shipyards to organize "at the point of production." The intelligence unit of the San Diego Police—known as the Red Squad—had also kept tabs on the influx of radicals into the labor movement. In the early 1970s, revelations that the police had engaged in Watergate-style break-ins against radical groups had forced curtailment of the monitoring of the unions. However, a labor desk was maintained, and Holowach—a target for surveillance during his antiwar days—found himself face to face with some of his old antagonists, now on the labor desk, monitoring NASSCO.

The F.B.I.'s evidence against the three accused men consists mainly of tapes and transcripts which suggest that Barton became friendly with the accused during the wildcat strike and, in a series of well-monitored meetings, they discussed the bombings, arranged to purchase explosive materials, manufactured a practice bomb that failed to explode when tested and made stink bombs, ostensibly to disrupt the shipyard during a working day.

Attorney Leonard Weinglass, who is representing one of the accused, plans to argue that Barton acted as a classical *agent provocateur*. According to pretrial depositions, when the purported plot seemed to be falling apart, Barton allegedly called the principals together to urge them to regroup. The arrests were made with the accused riding in Barton's van; the only working bomb recovered by the police was found in Barton's toolchest.

Moreover, NASSCO workers who knew Barton well describe him as provocative, flamboyant and given to fits of rage against the company. He was a leader in the militant wing of the strike movement—an intimidating figure, standing 6 feet 3 inches and weighing more than 250 pounds. His flair for T-shirts, cowboy hats and beer conveyed the image of a Hell's Angel rather than an incipient revolutionary, according to recollections by NASSCO workers and observers. "He was one of the more vocal, violent-type people on the picket line," recalled Craig Abernathy, who covered the strike for KOGO Radio.

John Adamson, 23, an Iron Workers shop steward, said Barton "talked to me about blowing up one of the power plants during a break in an arbitration hearing. Barton and I were talking and he started to get very hard core. 'I think a good idea would be to blow up one of the power transformers and put the lights out at NASSCO,' is how he put it."

These are among a dozen such incidents that Weinglass presented to the court in an attempt to get the judge to order a psychiatric evaluation of Barton before his testimony is admitted at the trial. Even so, Weinglass said the trial will focus on what the defendants think—or thought. "What we have is a classic conspiracy case," he explained. "Nothing happened. There was no bombing. Now, it used to be that if the defense could show that the government had induced the commission of a crime and provided the materials, a defense of entrapment was valid. But now the Burger Court has ruled that the prosecution can attempt to prove the defendants had a predisposition or inclination to commit the crime and what the government did to induce them is not so important. It's like Abscam. There, the F.B.I. set up situations that played on a politician's greed and avarice. In this case, they've played on feelings of powerlessness, desperation and anger over the death of a fellow worker."

To Weinglass the NASSCO case "is the first important political case of the 1980s. If labor, in the face of hard economic times, is going to be getting more militant, what we may be seeing here is the government's reaction to a militant union with ties to the left."

While Weinglass is battling the conspiracy charges, union attorney Tom Tosdal is fighting for reinstatement of the workers fired during the wildcat strike and related protests. He charges that the company's actions show an intent to weaken the union. Barton has admitted that he kept the company abreast of actions and plans by the union—including their legal strategies in arbitration issues. Tosdal has also presented testimony from NASSCO employees who

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state they were offered preferential treatment by the company if they would agree to inform on union leaders. He is seeking more evidence about the role played by the law firm of Littler, Mendehlsson, Fastiff & Tichy—named in the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s *Federationist* as the number-two union-busting law firm in the country. NASSCO hired LMF&T in January 1980, a move that brought about a more hostile climate of labor-management relations in the shipyard, according to Iron Workers officials.

Before that time, Iron Workers Local 627 had made some significant gains in improving shipyard safety. During their leadership's first year in office, more than 1,500 grievances were filed. The number of disabling injuries dropped; there were no on-the-job deaths until this past September. And when their contract was signed in late 1978, they won unprecedented language giving workers the right to stop work in unsafe situations.

During the first half of 1980, under the tutelage of these new lawyers, NASSCO seemed to relish confrontation. Routine grievances suddenly became difficult to resolve, forcing many minor disputes to go to costly arbitration proceedings; the most aggressive shop stewards began to receive punitive work assignments and transfers; the number of suspensions and firings for minor infractions escalated; the word was passed among the work force that the Iron Workers leadership was dominated by Communists who were anti-American. "If they were trying to provoke a confrontation, they certainly succeeded," said Salas.

Throughout the spring and early summer, tensions escalated in the yard. Huge lunchtime rallies were held, at which there were demands for a wildcat walkout. Company representatives were pelted with food and cans when they tried to speak. When a popular shop steward was fired in late July, more than 200 workers, led by Salas, Holowach and other militants, held a protest rally at a Saturday ship launching attended by an audience full of V.I.P.s, including several admirals and an Under Secretary of the Navy. That Monday, labeling the protest "a disgusting, disgraceful and unpatriotic display," NASSCO vice president Joe Flynn announced the first round of firings. The next day the wildcat walkout began.

Sixteen of the twenty-eight fired workers held key positions—usually shop steward or assistant shop steward—in the Iron Workers or Machinists unions. Salas, Holowach and the other activists offer this as proof that the company was seeking to break the union, whose effectiveness in fighting for improved safety conditions the company resented.

The first public mention of Communists and radicals among the work force came when TV reporters began asking Holowach questions about his antiwar activist past—questions Holowach is certain could only have been fed to them by the police. Pretrial testimony does reveal consultations among NASSCO security officers, the F.B.I. and local police, though details of the meetings are not publicly known.

Organization activities among the work force by the C.W.P. and other Marxist groups were no secret. The two C.W.P. members accused in the bomb plot—Loo and Johnson—were "open" members and had sold the party newspaper, *Workers Viewpoint*, at the main gate during shift changes. Aside from traditional blue-collar anti-Communism, the principal barrier to acceptance of the C.W.P. and other radical groups by NASSCO workers was a distrust of organizations with other, often secret, goals. But day-to-day work in the yards and the consistent advocacy of workers' rights by the so-called Communists did a lot to overcome this suspicion.

Following the conspiracy arrests, however, anti-Communism became a major issue among shipyard workers, and when the local's business agent, Cherokee Inchaurregui, fired Salas, he declared simply that the union "didn't need his services any more." Coming the day after the arrests and the release of Barton's affidavit, which was heavily laced with references to Salas, the firing stirred up a backlash among the workers against Communist bomb-throwing radicals, who, the F.B.I. claimed, were overrunning the union. Later, Inchaurregui attacked Salas directly for his alleged links to the C.W.P., which Salas has denied.

The impact of the anti-Communist backlash, while real, was moderated because workers appreciated the efforts of Salas and others to make Local 627 a fighting union. In fact, three days after the deaths of Bebbe and King, when the conservative *San Diego Union* began probing Communist influence at the shipyard, a strike leader stated flatly: "People didn't strike because the Communist Party told them to. . . . People struck because of safety."

The speaker was Ramon Barton, the informant and key witness in the upcoming bombing trial, playing to the hilt the role of militant unionist—or was it *agent provocateur*? □

Trade War

(Continued From Front Cover)

of interests masquerading as a contest of principles," and nowhere is this so true as in trade politics. The internationalists call for free trade—but the call comes loudest from international banks and corporations with a vested interest in the unencumbered flow of goods, capital and profits across national borders. The nationalists counter with demands for "fair trade"—the most recent euphemism for protectionism—in order to safeguard their traditional domestically oriented industries.

The debate is not new. Since the turn of the century, the United States business community has been divided on international economic policy. Banks, manufacturers, mining companies and agribusinesses with overseas interests have demanded that the United States take its "rightful place" among the great powers and keep the underdeveloped world open to American trade and investment. Other businessmen were content with their privileged access to the world's largest market at home, and worried primarily about keeping low-cost foreign products out.

Jeff Frieden writes on international economic issues and is an editor of Appeal to Reason.

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Through the 1920s, "internationalism" and "isolationism" were hurled like epithets by one camp at the other. The uneasy standoff satisfied no one, and in 1930 the protectionists took advantage of the worsening Depression to push through the Smoot-Hawley tariff, which raised the highest trade barriers in recent history around the United States. By the late 1930s, however, the preponderance of business sentiment was shifting back to free trade. The U.S. foreign policy establishment emerged from World War II firmly committed to economic internationalism, and the ensuing *Pax Americana* assured victory for the free-traders.

Yet this victory was not complete. The protectionist domestic manufacturers never surrendered, and their acquiescence in the successive rounds of tariff-cutting in the 1950s and 1960s was contingent on continued economic expansion. So long as the U.S. economy grew rapidly—as it did for an unprecedented twenty-five years after World War II—protectionism was not an issue. The "centrist consensus" that forged the welfare-warfare state also muted conflict over trade issues.

Now, as Alan Wolfe argues in his forthcoming book *America's Impasse* (Pantheon, 1981), all that has come to an end. As the recessionary 1970s spiral slowly downward into the depressionary 1980s, the centrist consensus has been shattered. The New Deal coalition has broken up, labor is in disarray, the welfare state is being dismantled, the military mobilized—and protectionism is once again on the agenda.

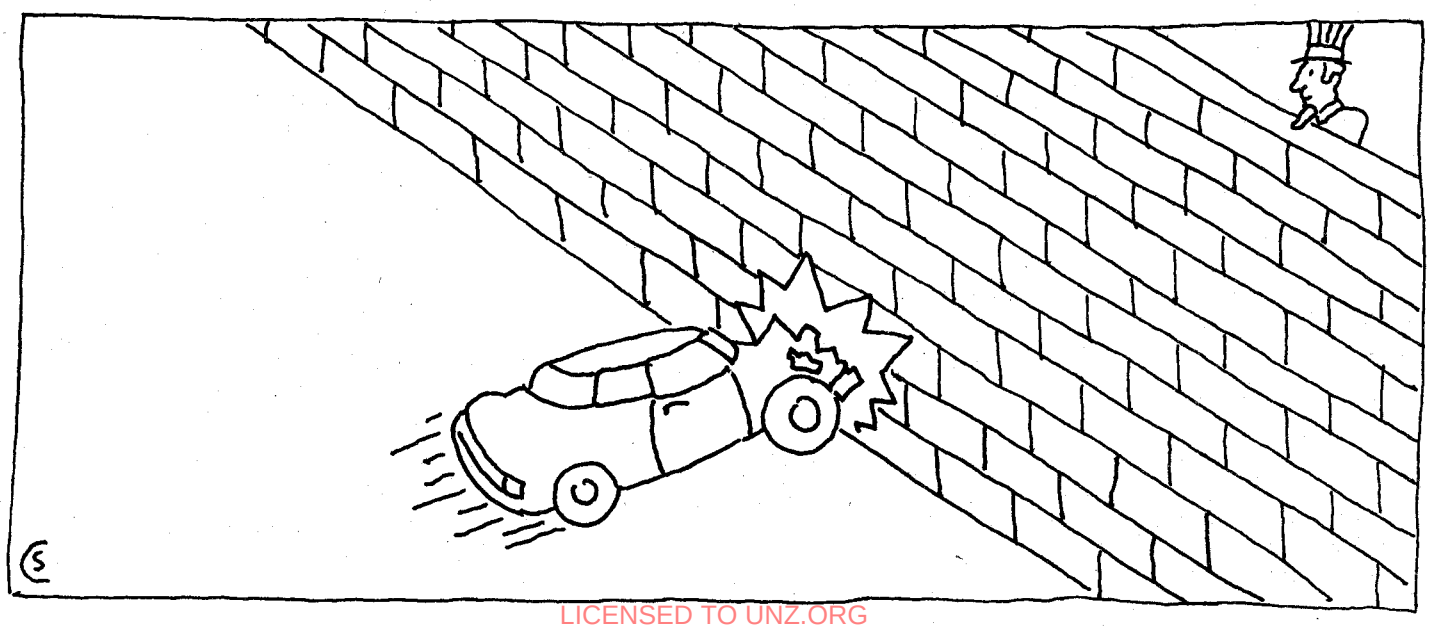
Today's dilemma is the fruit of many years of gradual change. Since World War II, international banks and multinational corporations have relentlessly shifted production from traditional industrialized areas to the developing nations, where wages and costs are lower and profits higher.

Dissatisfied with the potential and profitability of America's steel producers, for example, U.S. banks invested billions in the construction of huge new steel mills in Japan, South Korea, Brazil, Mexico and elsewhere. Industrial corporations shifted the labor-intensive aspects of their operations out of the Northeast and Middle West to Hong Kong and Haiti, building up local suppliers as they went. The result, inevitably, was that domestic industrialists in the United States faced foreign imports they could never hope to undersell, or lost previously lucrative export markets. In steel, European and American producers have steadily crumbled before the onslaught of cheaper steel from Japan and the Third World. In 1950, Western Europe and the United States accounted for three-quarters of the world's steel production; today, the figure is barely one-third. The decline is now accelerating. Last year, steel output in the United States dropped by 18 percent; in the developing countries it rose by 4 percent. A recent United Nations study indicates that between 1978 and 1985 the ten most industrialized developing nations, largely using money lent by Western banks, will have built new mills capable of producing 120 million tons of steel a year, substantially more than total current U.S. output.

The bankers' solution is clear: the people of the industrialized nations will simply have to accept their fate and go the way of all unprofitable investments. The result: "a gradual decline," says one Chase Manhattan executive, "in the living standards of major developed countries of the world."

The steel producers have different ideas, and they are joined by a growing number of declining industries: clothing, footwear, electrical machinery and now even the auto manufacturers. Free trade, they are finding, is fine when there's plenty of trade for everyone. When the economy slumps, the entrenched industries in the United States and Europe are the first to suffer, and in their pain they call out for protection from foreign competitors.

Thomas Graham, chief executive officer of Jones & Laughlin Steel, charged in January: "The root of the problem is the virtual destruction of the domestic industry's earning capability by the flow of imported steel from countries who are not playing by the rules." The automobile companies—after decades as free-traders—are inching toward protectionism; Ford is already there. And a broad coalition of corporations and unions in clothing, textiles, metalworking, steel, electrical appliances and glass is pushing for



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stricter government controls on imports from the less developed countries (L.D.C.s).

For internationally oriented businessmen, protectionism is a curse. The bankers especially have reason to worry. They extended tens of billions of dollars in loans to developing countries for the construction of new industrial facilities. These new factories were to pay for themselves by exporting a portion of their output to the West, the proceeds of which would go to service their debts. Economic stagnation in the industrialized countries has already reduced the demand for the debtors' products. Protectionist measures to keep these products out of Western markets would make it nearly impossible for the banks' clients to keep up payments.

Many multinational corporations have a similar pecuniary interest in free trade. Sixty-five of them, with total worldwide sales of $500 billion, work together in the Emergency Committee for American Trade, a powerful business lobbying group formed in 1967. The corporations concerned —which include such giants as Bank of America, Cargill, Citibank, Chase, Exxon, Honeywell, I.B.M., Sperry Rand, Texas Instruments, TRW and Xerox—have an average of nearly half their assets overseas and make almost half their money abroad. They fear that protectionism in the United States will lead to retaliation by other nations, and that rising barriers to trade will endanger the free flow of goods that their profits depend on. It is not surprising that newly appointed World Bank head A.W. Clausen, speaking from his current position as president of the Bank of America, calls protectionism "a global hazard with global consequences, and if we belittle its malignance, the costs will be global in magnitude."

An inexorable force, then—the expanding foreign interests of international banks and corporations—has met an immovable object—traditional industry in the domestic market—and neither can afford to give way. As one international businessman said in frustration: "From a rational point of view, we need a restructuring of the world economy, with the United States, Western Europe and Japan competing in the high-technology capital goods areas, and the L.D.C.s with the low-technology, labor-intensive products. But we're not in a position to restructure our economy in the short run, when unemployment everywhere is high and likely to remain so in the next few years. So you've got import restrictions on these products. . . . So I see a real conflict here."

The Reagan Administration finds itself at the center of this conflict, torn by its own ambivalence. Reagan the politician spent fifteen years building his base among the provincial, reactionary manufacturers who are now clamoring for protectionism. Reagan the candidate and Reagan the President have found it impossible to rule without the support and participation of Wall Street and the international business community, who are staunch and self-interested free-traders. (This dilemma is more thoroughly explored in *The Hidden Election: Politics and Economics in the 1980 Election*, Joel Rogers and Tom Ferguson, editors—to be published by Pantheon later this year.) The Administration's major appointments reflect this rivalry, and include representatives of both camps.

Yet the protectionists have the initiative. Their demands —and their political strength—will increase as the economy continues to deteriorate. Businessmen in trouble have welcomed Reagan's supply-side commitments to restore profits, but sober analysis indicates that supply-side nostrums will be unable to stop the decline of traditional industries. Businessmen have come to realize, for example, that the Administration's new depreciation package, which gives generous tax subsidies for business investment, will benefit only those companies making a profit. Today's financially endangered industries will gain little or nothing. Faced with the failure of one artificial attempt to increase sales and profits, manufacturers will turn to another—barriers to competitive imports.

Politically, the clamor for protectionism will be insistent and impossible to ignore. Labor leaders in declining sectors, with no independent program of their own to overcome the crisis, have already begun to ally with the employers to save their industries. The United Automobile Workers has lent its voice to the cry for auto import curbs, which are certain to go hand in hand with major wage cuts and production line speed-ups. Forty years of labor-management cooperation in a growing economy have trapped labor leaders in bed with some very sick industries. In desperation, they have become the most solicitous protectors of their former foes.

Congressmen from the fading industrial areas—like Jack Kemp of Buffalo—are under constant pressure from local businessmen and labor leaders. Republican Chalmers Wylie of Ohio calls himself a "born-again protectionist," and fellow zealots from the industrial Middle West and Northeast have introduced a continuing stream of protectionist legislation in the House and Senate. As the 1982 elections approach—and the campaign is just a year away—the candidates will certainly respond with clamorous calls for the sheltering of American industry against the cruel winds of foreign competition.

Support for protectionism transcends traditional party alignments. The Republican Party, since its earliest days the party of Northern industry, has a long protectionist tradition. Yet many leading Wall Street figures who are Republicans are also firm free-traders. Since the Presidency of Woodrow Wilson, Democrats have generally stood for free trade, and the most vigorous tariff-cutting has been carried out by Democratic administrations. Yet many traditional Democratic constituencies—Middle Western and Northeastern urban centers, the upper ranks of organized labor—are in the forefront of the protectionist assault.

In both parties, "moderates" have been free-traders and conservatives more prone to protectionism. With the Ford-Rockefeller wing in the Republican Party at bay, and the Kennedy wing of the Democratic Party in disarray, the electoral road seems open to major bipartisan initiatives for all manner of trade restrictions.

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Whether Reagan himself will side with his traditional power base and counter the economic deterioration of the 1980s with full-blown protectionism is impossible to say. If he does not, the endangered industrialists will certainly turn on him, perhaps seeking out another candidate in 1984 (John Connally is a perennial favorite). The signs in the initial months of the Reagan Presidency strongly indicate that protectionist pressures—already evident in Carter's campaign concessions to the steel industry on trigger pricing—will find sympathy with the new Administration:

§ The trigger-price mechanism to regulate steel imports is already being used more aggressively by the Reagan Administration to protect domestic steel. In one of its first moves, the revamped Commerce Department raised trigger prices sharply, by 4.4 percent, for the second quarter of 1981. The steel makers were cautiously optimistic; Republic Steel's chairman, who is also head of the American Iron and Steel Institute, said he was "encouraged" and looked forward to steeper increases.

§ Senators John Danforth of Missouri and Lloyd Bentsen of Texas have introduced legislation to reduce Japanese auto imports into the United States by 20 percent; in the House, Congressmen from Michigan and Indiana have introduced a bill to cut imports by 40 percent. Administration reaction has been mixed: the Secretaries of State and the Treasury oppose import restrictions, while the Secretaries of Transportation, Commerce and Labor as well as Trade Representative Bill Brock all favor some form of them.

§ The governors of Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Delaware, Wisconsin and Missouri—all big auto-producing states—have met with a sympathetic President Reagan to urge "voluntary" curbs on Japanese imports. Transportation Secretary Andrew Lewis supported the governors: "I feel the present level of Japanese imports is unacceptable."

§ Even before the recent nondecision on Japanese auto imports, the Administration had begun to badger the Japanese to reduce voluntarily their auto sales in the United States. By the time Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki visits Washington in May, the Administration hopes that the message will have been received and the Japanese will have moved to reduce their American sales. If not, the Japanese have been told, Congress will enact unilateral quotas by a veto-proof margin.

§ Brock, who insists on speaking of "fair trade" instead of free trade, has pledged more decisive action if the situation gets worse. "It is simply unacceptable," he has said in supporting import restrictions, "to allow demolition of our industrial base. This is the reality. It will not be tolerated." And, in words that may well be prophetic, he has defended steel protection, saying: "If the American people thought for a moment that autos and steel would go down the tube, you would see protectionism arise in this country that would be worse than anything since the Smoot-Hawley era."

§ More generally, Reagan officials have expressed a preference for one-to-one trade agreements instead of the current multilateral forms. This would allow the United States to pit its trading partners against each other, and to use diplomatic and other leverage against individual nations unwilling to agree to U.S. demands.

§ Meanwhile, the Administration has begun an aggressive campaign to help American manufacturers export more of their production to make up for stagnant markets at home.

If and when Reagan does opt for further measures to erect trade barriers, he will be adding a trade war to the list of possible international conflagrations. Competition among the nations of the world is already murderous. Japanese steel makers, with their markets in the developing countries under attack from South Korean, Brazilian and other Third World producers, tried in the mid-1970s to increase exports to Western Europe. But the European Economic Community (E.E.C.), whose steel industry has been in trouble for years, slapped quotas on Japanese imports. Squeezed out of Europe, the Japanese turned to the United States, which has reacted with protectionist measures of its own.

Indeed, the crisis in European steel drove the E.E.C. to declare a state of "manifest crisis" late last year, allowing for mandatory production quotas. Meanwhile, the E.E.C. has been pressuring developing nations to cut their steel sales in Western Europe, while European steel firms complain bitterly over American trade policies, especially the trigger-price mechanism. One French firm charged the United States with "outright protectionism" in its attempts to "continue to put European steel exports at an unfair disadvantage."

Also in France, where Japanese auto imports have been rising rapidly, the Government has used bureaucratic stalling tactics to effectively keep new-model Japanese cars piled up on French docks awaiting administrative approval. In textiles, where half of the French market has been lost to imports, manufacturers are calling for drastic measures to reduce the flow of goods from abroad.

Faced with a similar challenge, American textile firms have concentrated on increasing their exports of those items they make best or most cheaply. Working through a special Textile and Apparel Export Expansion Program of the Commerce Department, American manufacturers have succeeded in flooding Europe with American imports. As a result, one in eight British textile jobs has been lost in the past year, and many of the remaining 700,000 textile workers are working only part time. The response has been immediate, with British textile firms demanding protection and trade unionists demonstrating before Parliament against the American competition.

Even Holland, a traditional bastion of free trade which exports half of its gross national product, is feeling the pinch. Electronics behemoth Philips has been pushing for quotas on foreign television imports. Japanese autos now claim 26 percent of the Dutch market, up from 20 percent in just a year, and the Government has begun to try to stem the tide. There is little wonder that, in a recent survey of European business executives conducted by Business International, "the predominant view" was that "protectionist tenden-

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cies in Europe . . . will gather force in the coming years."

All this has a familiar ring for students of international relations. In the 1920s European reconstruction was based in large part on massive American bank loans to Germany, Italy and Eastern Europe—loans that were to be paid off by exporting to the booming United States. Yet as the Depression began, the United States closed its doors to European goods, German and Eastern European industries failed en masse and a wave of defaults swept through Europe. With no single power strong enough to enforce order on rival capitalist nations—as the United States did after World War II—the capitalist world disintegrated into competing currency and trading blocs: Britain's sterling area, France's gold bloc, the Americas, fascist Central and Southern Europe, Japan's Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

There is, of course, no agreement as to the direct causes of the Great Depression, but clearly the depth and length of the collapse were aggravated by the protectionist policies of domestic manufacturing interests in the major Western nations. Employing "beggar-thy-neighbor" policies of trade barriers, competitive currency devaluations and aggressive exports, each major power attempted to preserve its own industries at other nations' expense. Trade and currency wars marked the 1930s and set the stage for World War II.

If the United States should go to war any time in the near future, it seems more likely the opponent will be the Soviet Union or other Warsaw Pact states, rather than rival capitalists. Nevertheless, there are real parallels between today and the turbulent period between the wars. A wave of protectionism in the West would lead to a surge of crises and defaults in the most industrialized of the developing nations—and perhaps in Eastern European countries like Poland—that have used bank loans to build up large export industries. Deeply concerned about this threat, the director general of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the international trade organization, warned that rising protectionism "seriously threatens the whole fabric of postwar cooperation in trade policy."

Similar threats to the postwar economic order are arising elsewhere. After laborious negotiations, the United States last summer sabotaged plans for a "substitution account" scheme to stabilize international monetary relations. And similar U.S. sabotage has thrown the all but completed Law of the Sea Conference into total chaos.

Protectionism is not just significant for foreign relations. The drive to protect crisis-bound industries is simply one part of a sweeping reconstruction of American politics and economics that increasingly desperate domestic businessmen demand. United by concern over intolerable assaults on their markets and profits, they are gathering for a frontal assault on labor, social programs, regulation and foreign competition. The result, if they have their way, will be an austere, impoverished, repressive garrison state constantly at odds with the rest of the world.

No illusions should be harbored about the free-traders, though. Their program—known by such euphemisms as "structural adjustment" or "industrial redeployment"—calls for austerity, too, but on an international scale. The multinational corporations and banks want to relocate older, labor-intensive industries in the developing world where labor is already cheap and "disciplined."

Otto Schoeppler, chairman of Chase's London subsidiary, summarized the two positions nicely: "The Western world is going to feel a very cold wind of competition from the developing countries. The net result will be that either we accept this fact and reduce our own living standards, or we resort to protectionism which, in turn, will ultimately have the same long-term effect."

The fight over America's role in the world economy is heating up. The effects of the battle will be momentous for workers, farmers and common people around the world. Yet one sad fact of international economic policy is that those who most suffer its consequences are the most powerless. Distorted media coverage of trade issues adds to the confusion. The two "alternatives"—protectionism or free trade—are presented as viable solutions for labor and the poor, when they are actually business strategies for survival.

Many in the labor movement and on the left, indeed, are turning toward protectionism in an effort to save jobs. But high-sounding phrases and plans mask the real purpose of economic nationalism—to maintain the profitability of domestic industrialists, a goal which will inevitably require major attacks on labor.

Some liberals and labor leaders, in an attempt to meet the crisis without resorting to protectionism, are calling for "industrial policy"—as indeed Robert Reich did in these pages. [See "The True Road to Industrial Renewal," *The Nation*, March 7.] A national industrial policy would maintain free trade by phasing out troubled industries peacefully and replacing them (it is hoped) with newer and more competitive industries. In reality, this is simply one version of the strategy of international business—to deal with industries in which profits are too low and wages too high by eliminating them and rehiring the laid-off workers for more profitable enterprises at much lower wages, if at all.

Neither protectionist barriers nor free-trade industrial policies are the answer. Both are just the preferred policies of different segments of the business community, and in this time of crisis both entail splitting and assailing labor and the poor. Labor leaders who back one policy or another to save "their" industries are providing the ammunition for a concerted assault on labor as a whole.

Just as the nation's economic crisis will cause labor's more compromised and confused leaders to draw closer to industry, so will it cause many to question the traditional pattern of labor-management collaboration. A truly progressive response to the crisis must reject illusory "industrial" panaceas and work instead for a politically independent labor movement. There are no simple or immediate remedies for the failing economy, but one thing is certain: for labor to face the crisis effectively, it will have to abandon its customary role as supporter of one or another wing of the business community and strike out on its own in a fight for its interests. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

'It Must Have Been _____'

SIDNEY LUMET

I have just finished a movie called *Prince of the City.* It's a long, complex film and one of the most difficult and satisfying movies I've ever made. It's about a cop informing on other cops, and I was drawn to the theme for very personal reasons.

In the early 1950s I was a young, hotshot director at CBS. I had two very successful shows on the air: *Danger,* a melodrama series on Tuesday nights, and *You Are There,* which was not only getting awards right and left but was even *sponsored* on a Sunday evening in the 6:00 to 6:30 time slot. The sponsor of *Danger* was a marvelous man, Mel Block, who made Ammident toothpaste and Pycopay toothbrushes. As blacklisting spread through CBS, he became more and more disturbed. And when I was "named" in the *American Legion Magazine,* Mel was determined to fight. He asked me to go see Dan O'Shea to get CBS off his back. O'Shea was a captain of industry, a leading Catholic who raised and gave lots of money to the Church, and whose job it was to clear people employed by CBS. He was also gentle, intelligent, warm, and felt that his job was "to save as many of you as I can."

O'Shea's first words as I came through the door were, "Please don't come in with your hands up." I had come in angry. I was angry at myself. I felt that *any* questioning of my beliefs was a violation of everything this country stood for. So why was I there? Because I wanted to keep working, of course. To be wiped out without a trace for an unknown reason was intolerable. Just not working was intolerable.

The only hint of why I'd been accused came when he asked me if I'd been a member of the Communist Party. I answered, "Never," hating myself as I did it. I had just taken a step I didn't want to take. There was already enough knowledge of where this led. Many accused persons had come in indignantly and had wound up a week or a month or a year later doing the unspeakable: naming names. Was I now on the same path? I had no names to name, as I had not been a Communist, but there were people I knew who had already been blacklisted, and about whom I would be asked down the road. If one hoped to be cleared, the only thing that worked was showing your good faith by answering anything about anybody: informing.

We chatted a while longer on a "Dan"–"Sid" basis. As I left I turned to him and asked, "How can you do this job?" I'll always remember his answer: "Better one of us, than one of them." This civilized, liberal man was doing the zealots' work for them.

After about a month, Mel Block's brother Stuart came to see me. He was embarrassed and apologetic. He said they had finally traced the source of my being named. It came from Harvey Matusow, who later became notorious and was prosecuted for recanting much of the testimony in his book, *False Witness.* Matusow was in the hierarchy of our government's professional anti-Communist informers. He claimed to have been a C.P. member, found God one day and was now atoning for his sins by testifying, in case after case, against former members. Stuart Block said that Matusow had seen me at some C.P. meetings. Would I meet with Matusow and Victor Riesel, a Hearst columnist, at Mel Block's apartment to see if this could all be straightened out? Both he and Mel would understand if I refused; it sickened them to even propose it, but Mel had fought as hard as he could and hoped I would come. I said yes. Mel had done something then considered herculean: he had gotten the information and set up a meeting.

The next two weeks were a nightmare of confused feelings: self-loathing for going at all, elation at the idea of confrontation, gratitude to Mel Block for having traced the accusation to its source. There was the chance to be heroic and true to myself, the dread of no longer working, the abyss of the end of a career. And the knowledge that, when this ordeal was over, clearance was only possible by taking that last step: informing.

I walked up Park Avenue in a turmoil. The hope that a speeding cab could settle the conflict occurred to me. As I rode up the elevator I didn't know whether I'd be Tom Paine or crawl to save myself. I had no idea what I was going to do. I knew only the basic thing that I still believe today: that in truly critical situations advance planning doesn't work. One responds to the moment. The elevator opened into the apartment. I walked across the thirty-foot living room. Riesel didn't get up, but Matusow did to shake hands.

I started what felt like a diatribe: how dare you, what kind of people are you, what right do you have, don't you know the meaning of this country, etc. Much to my astonishment and terror, I was behaving "well." Matusow raised his hands and said, "Don't get yourself in a fit, you're not the one." I stopped. Everything that had been racing at ninety miles an hour suddenly had no place to go. Matusow then said to Riesel and Block, "He's not the one. It must have been _____," naming someone I'd never heard of. There was a minute of chitchat and the meeting broke up. Matusow and I rode down in the elevator together. He asked if I needed a lift.

Perhaps it was the dim memory of this experience that informed my reading of Robert Daley's book, *Prince of the City*; I knew immediately that I wanted to make a movie of it. Briefly, it's the true story of Bob Leuci, a New York detective in the Narcotics Division. He is assigned to a new team, the Special Investigative Unit, with seventy other detectives, New York's best, to crack the hard core of dope in New York City. They are the elite. They have no one to report to, no assigned precinct, no time cards, no paperwork. They are asked only to produce results: arrests.

It is 1971, the time of the Knapp Commission hearings. The air is crackling with investigations of police by other policemen. Bill Phillips and Frank Serpico are about to testify about police corruption. Leuci is questioned by city investigator Nicholas Scoppetta as a normal part of the commission procedure. A relationship develops between them. Scoppetta suggests that Leuci go underground for them. Leuci refuses, saying he will not fink on other cops. Eventually he comes over because, among other reasons, he's convinced

Sidney Lumet's film Prince of the City *will open around Labor Day. His other films include* Serpico, Dog Day Afternoon *and* Network.

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that bail bondsmen, lawyers and judges are integrally involved in dope traffic. They are the truly corrupt ones. Leuci lays down one primary condition; he will never wear a wire or testify against his friends or partners, anyone he has worked with. The government agrees. He becomes the classic informer.

He has also set in motion the classic tragedy of the man who knowingly steps into a situation feeling he can control the circumstances, only to find that the circumstances are controlling him. For by the time his six years of work are over, more than fifty detectives in S.I.U. will be indicted for corruption, two will commit suicide, one will go insane and Leuci will turn in friends *and* partners. He will also confess to being just as corrupt as those he turned in and will escape prosecution only because of his government work as an informer.

Prince of the City is not only about informing, however. It is also about cops and the complexity of their lives. I've known a lot of cops, most of whom join the force with a good deal of idealism. They wind up with the highest suicide and alcoholism rates of any profession. In Leuci's life, the circumstances of informing added even more pressure.

Leuci has often talked about what the informer's life does to the psyche. All emotions were disguised, turned into something else. He was in constant danger of being killed. But fear was the first thing to hide because its detection would have been a dead giveaway, literally. So lying became a way of life. He reached a point where he himself didn't know whether or not he was telling the truth about the simplest thing. Improvising, inventing, not really answering, he became a whole other person in his own skin.

Working out my own feelings about an informer was probably the biggest single problem for me. My own experience at CBS had left me a lot more compassionate about them. I kept thinking of that elevator ride to Mel Block's apartment, not knowing which way I'd go. In *Prince of the City*, I did my best not to prejudge this issue—to let the conflicting tensions speak for themselves. But I am too close to *Prince* to know how much of my ambivalence has found its way into the movie. As work progressed, I found myself moved more and more by Leuci.

For looking back, it is now clear to me there was one essential difference between Leuci's experience and mine. People who named names in the 1950s, as much as I feel for them, were violating themselves and injuring our democratic institutions. Bob Leuci was trying to break dope. He didn't succeed, but he put a big dent in organized police support of it. Whatever his reasons, he tried. So for me he's a hero. Informing in criminal activity is very different from informing in the political sphere. □

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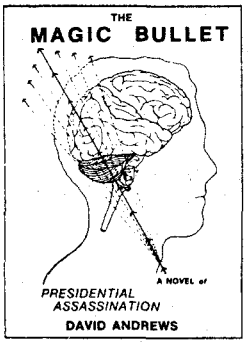

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A World of 'Be Here Now'

KATHA POLLITT

FLOWERS OF EMPTINESS: Reflections on an Ashram. *By Sally Belfrage. The Dial Press. 256 pp. $10.95.*

Why do Westerners take up with Indian gurus? (*a*) They're bored and it's something to do. (*b*) They're directionless and want someone to tell them what to do. (*c*) They're narcissistic, and guru-worship allows them to confuse spiritual enlightenment with thinking about themselves literally all the time. (*d*) They're unhappy and confused, and the guru, a shrewd operator, knows just how to keep them off balance. (*e*) They feel unloved and unlovable, and what the guru offers them looks, at least for a while, like love.

There's evidence aplenty for each of these theories—and for quite a few harsher judgments as well—in Sally Belfrage's fascinating diary of her visit to the ashram of Bhagwan Shri Rajneesh in Poona, India. Belfrage is a very good personal journalist—her book on the civil rights movement, *Freedom Summer*, is a classic—and her picture of ashram life is lively, honest and full of juicy details, most of which support the skeptic's worst suspicions about Bhagwan and his adorers. Bhagwan teaches a blend of Hinduism and Wilhelm Reich, and makes his 60,000 followers wear orange clothing (to help them be cheerful) and his photograph on a rosary around their necks. And yet, Belfrage came away something of an adorer herself.

When Belfrage leaves her London home for India she is hardly a passionate pilgrim. What with her writing, her two children, a love affair and a wide circle of friends, she was successfully putting her life back together after a bitter divorce. But first one close friend, the brilliant novelist-playwright-intel-

Katha Pollitt is a New York writer whose first collection of poems will be published by Knopf later this year.

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lectual Dinah, joins up with Bhagwan, and then another close friend, the beautiful Laingian therapist Judith, not only fails to dissuade Dinah but ends up wearing orange herself. Belfrage accepts their offer of a ticket to India with the idea of somehow saving her friendships, and maybe her friends as well.

Belfrage's loyalty to Dinah and Judith is moving, but I must say I found them, before and after Bhagwan, rather hard to take. The reader seeking to confirm his anti-ashram prejudices need look no further than these two independently wealthy and profoundly miserable veterans of, apparently, every therapeutic, political and intellectual fad that has swept through literary-left-ish London in the past decade. As a matter of fact, *all* Belfrage's friends seem to have trendy enthusiasms. The anti-Bhagwanites simply prefer, say, reincarnation therapy.

Belfrage goes to "Bagwash" protesting all the way. She notes that Dinah and Judith seem more unhappy since conversion. And how can Dinah be planning to move to Poona for good and leave her children behind with their father? Belfrage hates meditating and encounter-grouping at the Rajneesh Centre in London, and she hates the people she meets there even more: they're boring, officious, humorless and none too clean. Traveling around India before coming to the ashram, she's appalled by the poverty and semi-starvation, the omnipresent beggars, the families camped out in railroad stations. Whatever its meaning for the glutted West, for the Indians themselves self-realization à la Bhagwan seems just "a vicious joke."

The ashram itself does little to challenge these views, at first. "Everywhere the orange creatures waft, their loose robes lifting in the breeze, a glazed and inward-looking aspect to their eyes which makes you think of one-way mirrors." Wrapped up in a "boundless ego trip to lose the ego," these feckless and bedraggled trust-funded hippies discuss Rolfing and yoga, while beggars are turned away from the ashram gates. But then it would be "imperialist," says Dinah, to assume that death means the same to Indians as to Westerners.

Bhagwan himself lives in the only air-conditioned house in the ashram, is driven about in a Mercedes, wears gold cuff links and appears at daily audiences accompanied by his three female attendants (all heiresses) and carrying an Yves St. Laurent towel. "He looks polished, buffed," writes Belfrage on first viewing him, "like very expensive fingernails." He has an international repertory of bad jokes, including anti-Semitic ones. He makes presents of his toenail clippings to the lucky faithful, who, in order to see him, must wash their hair dozens of times with scentless shampoo, for Bhagwan dislikes perfume. Thuggish chief disciples guard the door to smell each person's hair and pass judgment, rather like bouncers at the old Studio 54.

Belfrage finds all this repulsive—authoritarian, manipulative and just plain crazy. But she also finds Bhagwan "amazing"—his "eyes are alert and calm at once, radiating a kind of final authority." "His *attention*: He is there with me, in and around me. I'm surrounded with awareness." Before her two weeks are up she, too—to her surprise—has converted and is cooing over her new Bhagwan-given name, Ma Deva Kanan (Madam Divine Wild Forest), which strikes her as preternaturally apt ("How did he know? *He really knows*").

To *her* surprise, perhaps, but not to mine. *Flowers of Emptiness* offers a plethora of explanations for her conversion. Some are provided by Belfrage herself: Bhagwan's supremely confident personality, the appeal of "a completely protected environment in which to let go," "the comfort and symmetry of life where everyone must fall in line like filings magnetized," that ends "the terrible need to choose." There's the joy of "being in a movement again," part of a "glorious cause." (This did surprise me. From the way she describes it, there's less communal feeling at the ashram than you'd find at your local laundromat.)

There has to be more to it, though—or do I mean less?—or we'd all be wearing orange. Call me a rationalist snob, but I can't see Belfrage as Everywesterner. Rather, she seems a woman who prides herself on "saying yes" to life, but whose idea of affirmation is couched in terms of giving in to other, stronger forces. She compares conversion to "glorying" in the pain of childbirth rather than fighting it, and to the moment when she stopped trying to write during her children's vacation and "surrendered" to their need for love.

Her marriage had been the traditional one of wifely submission and identity loss. Yet she's furious when Bhagwan says meditation will make her "a better

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wife." Who wants to be that? But she herself compares the convert's loss of his old self to that of a wife taking her husband's name. Her comparison of Bhagwan's method of conversion with the seduction patter of a teen-age boy in the back seat of a car is exactly right. He wins her by offering her at once male approval and a chance to show how daring she is. It's the old are-you-woman-enough-to-give-me-everything line.

Well, a little seduction can be harmless enough, in its place. Back in London, Belfrage soon drops the orange and the Divine Wild Forest, and her kids won't let her play her Bhagwan tapes in the car. Nonetheless, she tells us that Bhagwan's "Be Here Now" philosophy has given her renewed pleasure in daily life, and I suppose we must believe her. Her friends, who stay behind in India, are less lucky: Judith joins the inner circle of females and comes into her own as a thoroughly smug and self-infatuated person, while poor Dinah, who has given up her children and her writing in return for the privilege of cleaning ashram toilets, sinks into a numb despair that may well be permanent.

If there's a flaw in this generally perceptive and thoughtful book, it's that Belfrage can mourn the disintegration of her two best friends, but not hold Bhagwan at least partially responsible. After all, when three people take a drug and two become violently ill, we *know* the drug is dangerous, even if the third comes away with only a pleasant high. For Belfrage to say that you get from Bhagwan "what you can take," that "whatever the decision, it's only yours," is a cop-out. A strong, basically happy person like Belfrage can make a rational decision about the place of guru-worship in her life, but that is not the kind of person who usually feels a powerful attraction to gurus in the first place. □

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VERDI: *La Traviata.* Maria Callas, Alfredo Kraus, Mario Sereni. Chorus and Orchestra of the San Carlos Opera House, Lisbon; Franco Ghione, cond. Angel ZBX-3910. $19.98 (two disks, mono; recorded at performance, March 27, 1958).

In the Italian operatic repertory, the use of "original instruments" is decidedly on the wane. The dearth of properly trained, securely maintained voices of the caliber to fill the dramatic roles of the Verdi-Puccini-*verismo* literature can no longer be explained away as a local shortage resulting from increasing international demand. Even without the complications of exclusive contracts (now almost nonexistent except for superstars Sutherland and Pavarotti), satisfactory casting of operatic recordings has become almost impossible; you can count on ten fingers the roles in the above-listed recordings sung by ap-

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propriate voices, in good working order, fluently and stylishly used, aptly characterized. And three of them are in the twenty-three-year-old resuscitation of a disorderly Lisbon performance of *La Traviata*, hardly an ideal souvenir of Maria Callas in one of her most important roles. Presumably it is the only one of several surviving tapes that could be cleared for commercial release.

Clearly, something has broken down: the unofficial but very real "system" that provided a steady supply of suitable singers to Italy's many theaters, with enough cream to be skimmed off for the international seasons of London and New York, as well as surplus to compensate for the considerable number of voices that failed to survive their natural span because of improper method or maintenance. This system, a network of smaller "farm club" theaters, knowledgeable teachers and coaches, has evidently faded away since World War II, its decline unremarked and thus unremedied.

The cause of this decline is not, surely, a shortage of vocal potential in postwar generations. Common sense argues that the potential is probably as great as ever, but it is not being directed toward operatic careers. Several factors suggest themselves, although it would take a sociological study to confirm them. For one thing, the increasingly prosperous Italian economy has reduced the financial incentive that was so clearly involved in the ascent of many famous singers from the lower classes. A long Italian tradition of spontaneous amateur music-making has suffered from the inroads of the transistor radio and other canned music, while the Catholic Church and its choirs—a traditional mechanism by which voices were discovered—are no longer part of the adolescence of many Italians.

Most of all, however, the centrality of opera in Italian society has greatly diminished. For more than a century, it was the national art form: its composers and performers were public figures, its great premieres touched all levels of society, its emotional and dramatic concerns matched those of the entire society. (This era is handsomely and entertainingly documented in William Weaver's *The Golden Century of Italian Opera, from Rossini to Puccini*, Thames and Hudson, $27.50.) But later composers could not sustain such levels of social relevance, expressive directness, or invention and craftsmanship; opera lost contact with popular culture and became a museum object—an inevitable development, for such a happy equilibrium of high and vernacular culture is historically rare and never long-lived.

The consequences have affected not only Italy, for the Italian training system was also the route by which foreign singers—especially Spaniards and Eastern Europeans—acquired the technical and stylistic foundations for an operatic career. Witness the thin and unreliable, emphatically non-Italianate sound of the Rumanian Ileana Cotrubas, the coarse brassiness of the Russian Elena Obraztsova.

Perhaps the most disappointing recording in this lot is the *Rigoletto* conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini. As a born and bred Italian with much experience in the theater, he should be able to impart a sense of the meaning and tradition of the work. Twenty-five years ago, for example, he conducted a quite delightful recording of Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri* (recently reissued as Seraphim IB-6119, $11.98, two disks),

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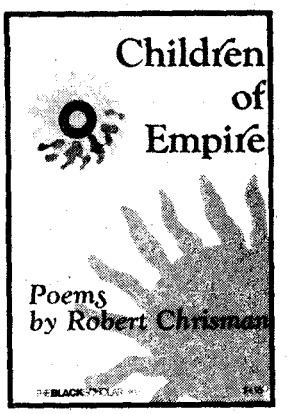

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textually inauthentic by modern standards but incomparably vivid musically and theatrically. But Giulini today seems to have completely lost touch with his roots, and his *Rigoletto* is thoroughly soporific. The younger Riccardo Muti seems uninterested in tradition or even in coherence; although the program notes make much of his "return to the composer's wishes," his *Cav 'n' Pag* are full of unmotivated contrasts and incoherent tempos, as well as some truly unlistenable singing.

Karajan's recordings are still more exaggerated orchestrally, though always remarkably refined in detail. If these pieces were symphonic poems, the readings might possibly make sense. But *Tosca* is a melodrama, and cannot be played as if every intermediate cadence were a full stop (nor does the "Te Deum" make any effect if the Scarpia is palpably miked up, rather than triumphantly riding the orchestral and choral background). The sound of poor Freni and Carreras straining to be Aïda and Radames could be enjoyed only by a sadist, and a comparison of the tenor's sound in this *Tosca* with his earlier recording confirms how unwise is his current course. In *Falstaff*, the veterans Taddei and Panerai (and, in a *comprimario* part, the wonderful tenor Piero de Palma) remind us that this is a comic opera, which Karajan seems not to know. In *Luisa Miller*, Maazel achieves some Karajan-like contrasts, along with a rhythmic stiffness and textural fussiness that make his work even less tolerable.

In fact, even were the singing better, these recordings would be hard to enjoy, for they have all missed the point of the operas. The one conductor in the lot to grasp the style is Levine, who has taught the London recording orchestra how to play with *slancio* and sentiment (the little orchestral introduction to the tenor-baritone duet in the last act of *Bohème* is a model of appropriate execution); alas, Scotto's vocal condition is so worn as to render stretches of this recording embarrassing.

Fortunately, there are many older recordings in which Italian opera was performed by skilled and committed singers and conductors, so that future generations will be able to grasp what this repertory was really about—but they will also surely wonder at the amounts of money now being spent to document the collapse of the tradition. □

THINGS THAT ARE WORSE THAN DEATH

(For Margaret Randall)

You are speaking of Chile,
of the woman who was arrested
with her husband and their five-year-old son.
You tell how the guards tortured the woman, the man, the child,
in front of each other,
"as they like to do."
Things that are worse than death.
I can see myself taking my son's ash-blond hair in my fingers,
tilting back his head before he knows what is happening,
slitting his throat, slitting my own throat
to save us that. Things that are worse than death:
this new idea enters my life.
The guard enters my life, the sewage of his body,
"as they like to do." The eyes of the five-year-old boy, Dago,
watching them with his mother. The eyes of his mother
watching them with Dago. And in my living-room as a child,
the word, Dago. And nothing I experienced was worse than death,
life was beautiful as our blood on the stone floor
to save us that—my son's eyes on me,
my eyes on my son—the ram-boar on our bodies
making us look at our old enemy and bow in welcome,
gracious and eternal death
who permits departure.

Sharon Olds

Sharon Olds is the author of Satan Says, *a book of poems (University of Pittsburgh Press).*

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

Lolita

Now that *Lolita* has made its dismaying appearance and swift exit, what is there to say? Post-mortems on theatrical cadavers are useful only if there's something exemplary about them, if some theme or pattern is traceable in the demise. Edward Albee's adaptation of the Nabokov novel suggests several areas. One is the general question of stage versions of novels and the particular problem of adapting so *literary* a work as Nabokov's, one so thoroughly constructed out of verbal play and linguistic adventure. Another is Albee's sad career, which has taken an almost steadily downward course ever since *Tiny Alice*, or, some might argue, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* And then there is the mystery of why something approaching total blindness should so often afflict people concerned with productions that are marked for disaster from the beginning.

From the moment the set came in sight at the Brooks Atkinson, a premonition stirred. For it was a dismal, halfheartedly abstract affair of black flats divided into cubiclelike spaces, with some random fragmentary quotations from the novel strewn on their surfaces. (Later, various props and settings would be laboriously trundled on as the flats revolved, or did something or other.) Then, when a narrator strolled on, a Nabokov-figure it was more than clear, and began to speak to the audience with a partly lofty, partly elbow-in-the-ribs attitude and tone, all the omens of catastrophe were in place.

Still, one waited, held there by memories of the book, by a sort of grim fascination with the possibilities of its corruption, along with a thin hope that they might be turned down. But that wasn't to be. Every way in which Nabokov's splendidly witty and poignant fable could be denatured, insulted and travestied was pursued, with dogged malice, it seemed—unless sheer ineptitude was the explanation.

The criminality was of the two orders usual in such cases: acts of omission and commission. What was left out was nearly every trace of Nabokov's verbal éclat. The shreds that remained were infrequent lines from the original, which

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one recognized without pride or satisfaction, merely a glum renewal of the sense of how bad everything else was. What was absent, too, was any awareness at all of what the novel might have been *about*, what realms of imagination it occupied.

Twenty-five years after the book was published it ought to be clear to any reasonably well-educated person—someone like Albee, say—that Nabokov's real subject wasn't sex. To give it the briefest possible description, it was America, time, age and mortality. Sex was there, of course, but as a powerful metaphor for more subtle hungers; the discrepancy between desire and actuality was the book's true impulsion. When Humbert says at one point that "what I had madly possessed was not she, but my own creation," he's speaking the literal as well as the literary truth. And when the imaginary editor says in the preface that "not a single obscene term is to be found in the whole work," Nabokov's strategy is unmistakable.

The eroticism of the novel is diffuse, a matter of brilliant innuendo and crazily lyrical suggestion. In Albee's hands it becomes overt and, what's more, meanly and sniggeringly palpable. Where there were no obscene words in the book, and scarcely any directly sexual ones, for that matter, Albee's text is ripe with "ass" (as in "piece of"), "cum," "nookie," "squirt," "bugger," "gangbang" and "tongue"—to describe an action, or the desire for it, that becomes more and more obsessive as the play goes on. The atmosphere is that of a Las Vegas convention, with poor Humbert (played lugubriously by Donald Sutherland) as the star salesman putting on a wacky little sideshow for his buddies.

The image isn't all that farfetched. The narrator's jocosely prurient remarks to the audience drew appreciative guffaws from those spectators, male and female, who might be described precisely as buddies for the evening, sharers of winks and escapades. Before a scene of explicitly sexual activity is about to take place a curtain is coyly drawn while the narrator (played by Ian Richardson, also lugubriously) says to the house, "Is there any one of you out there who doesn't understand?"—to which the response is one of those explosive bursts of inane reflexive laughter with which references to sex on Broadway are usually greeted.

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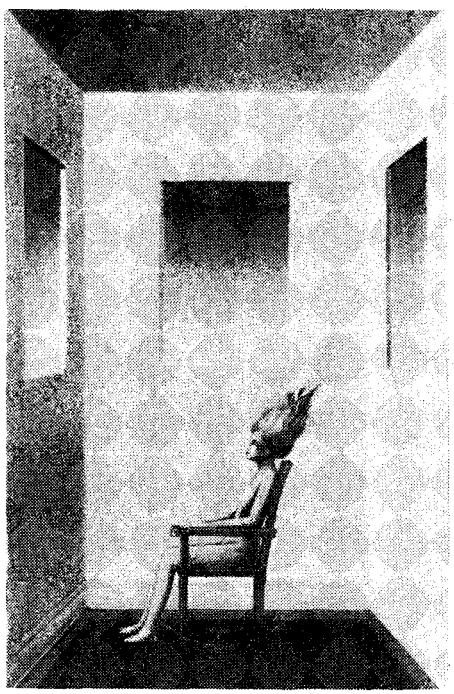

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Structurally and thematically, Albee's play thoroughly distorts the novel, inflating certain of its elements while diminishing or entirely ignoring others. Quilty, a character present only in the last few pages of the book, is turned into a running gag; Mrs. Haze, a not unsympathetic character in the original, is played (by Shirley Stoler, who was only obeying orders) as a monster of gross appetite. At the same time, all the wonderful integument and ground—the rendering of an America of motels, highways, sad small towns and neon manifestoes—have wholly disappeared.

Admittedly, all that would be hard to translate. Yet even so, absolute fidelity isn't demanded of an adapter and something might have remained or been created: a new, smaller perspective, perhaps, or an equivalence in spare theatrical terms for the book's abundance. But Albee lacks all means. "Oh, my Lolita, I have only words to play with!" is Humbert's lament and Nabokov's triumph. But words are what Albee doesn't possess, nor has he possessed them for years. His decline in imaginative power and verbal prowess, after the real strengths of the early plays, is greatly puzzling, though no more so than the similar loss of skills of the other leading names of postwar American drama, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams.

Short of a full-scale inquiry into the phenomenon, what can be said is that in Albee's case, at least, an *idea* of theater, and of the language proper to that idea, came to replace a direct histrionic sense. Beginning with *A Delicate Balance*, nearly all of Albee's plays have been curiously abstract, inert, composed in language that seems either to struggle toward a philosophical, or simply existential, profundity it can't begin to reach; or toward a shorthand of expression such as playwrights like Pinter or Beckett can bring off but that in Albee seems merely quirky and willed.

Indeed, Pinter and Beckett would appear to be Albee's chief unfortunate influences during these years. I say "unfortunate" because I think that after the inventive realism of *The Zoo Story* and *Virginia Woolf*, Albee was seduced by a notion that to maintain his suddenly acquired reputation as "the most interesting younger American playwright" he had to go off in new, oblique, "experimental" directions. The result has been the strain and emptiness of so much of his work. *Lolita*—like last season's *Lady From Dubuque*—represents, I think, an attempt at something more immediately appealing, something less restrained. It came out all wrong. □

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FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Cutter and Bone
Thief
La Drôlesse

When the movie makers, some years back, lost confidence in the popular appeal of the shootout at the Last Chance Saloon, they began to psychologize the Western, introducing sheriffs burdened by guilt complexes, cowhands who failed to observe a shy respect for the womenfolk, the sadistic application of branding irons and similar box-office inducements. These devices may well have extended the life of the horse opera. But it had been a highly stylized, if not profound, dramatic form, and the sick Western smudged the lines, trading the appeal of innocence for a sophistication with which the posses and outlaws were not prepared to cope.

A similar distortion has been occurring in the area of the crime thriller, a formula for entertainment less pure than the Western, but offering similarly predictable ingredients—an ingenious plot, unremitting suspense and fast action, usually culminating in a chase. These attractions now come embellished with neuroses and behavior pushed to the edge of horror. And the characters resort a good deal to personal confession, the malefactors among them being particularly quick to attribute their aberrant ways to stunted childhoods or social injustice—private matters which participants in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* or *The Lavender Hill Mob* would have scorned to air.

These "adult" thrillers also pride themselves less on the convolutions of their plots (which in retrospect often seem unenterprising) than on their ability to prevent the audience from seeing or hearing what is being done or said. Actors well trained to mutter and mumble are much in demand; crucial scenes are filmed in almost complete darkness; it is not unusual for a key line of dialogue to be pronounced at the moment when a heavy truck is passing ten feet from the camera. Such pictures put the strain not on the quickness of the viewer's wits but on the acuity of their senses. Not infrequently, they insult the viewer's intelligence.

In *Cutter and Bone*, for example, people display an ability to spring from maudlin drunkenness to astute sobriety in a matter of minutes—a knack which long observation of the effects of alcohol disposes me to suspect everything else that occurs in the yarn. And the occurrences need all the help they can get if they are to enjoy the fleeting credibility that even thrillers require. Instead, the film devotes itself to the psychological problems and personal relations of a pair of Vietnam veterans and the woman who, when sober, looks on them both with some dismay.

Bone (Jeff Bridges) thinks he may have recognized a man who dumped the body of a girl in a very dark alley, but the war years taught him that one stays healthy by keeping quiet and out of sight. Cutter (John Heard), much decorated for valor and pitifully crippled by the wounds that earned him the medals, has made a fetish of heroism and sustains his morale by an undiminished zest for the hunt. One sees that a situation of some interest might be built on the symbiotic but antagonistic relationship between the men, particularly as reflected in the behavior of an intelligent, if deracinated, woman (Lisa Eichhorn) who is emotionally dependent on them both. However, that side of the picture is made superficial, even cheap, by the melodramatic tracking down of the abominable murderer.

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And the vicarious joy of watching little men topple an evil colossus is diluted by the requirement that we heed the subjective ills and aspirations of the avengers. It is an uneasy mixture of tragedy and tomfoolery. *Cutter and Bone* was directed by Ivan Passer; screenplay by Jeffrey Alan Fiskin from a novel by Newton Thornburg. The best thing about it is its title, one that Dickens would have admired.

Thief is the short, sad story of a master crook, a larcenous virtuoso named Frank (James Caan). Though in truth there is little virtuosity in Frank's professional style: he smashes safes, he smashes cars, he smashes faces and gets his own face smashed; he tosses sacks of dynamite around like a litterbug on a picnic. In one night he can steal enough uncut diamonds to bring South Africa to its knees. But behind this one-man impersonation of an armored division storming Fort Knox, Frank is as vulnerable and devoid of common sense as a shucked oyster. Now in his late 30s and having spent most of his youth in prison, he is determined to live his remaining years as the Earl of Suburbia. He owns what looks like a used-car bonanza, but that is no more than a front and a source of pocket money.

Frank's ambition is as large as it is foolish. And Jessie (Tuesday Weld), a coffee-shop cashier who is said to have learned about life in the underworld of Mexico, nevertheless marries this unexploded bomb and repairs with him and an adopted baby to the split-level home of her dreams. Jessie trusts Frank and Frank seeks the advice of a bearded lag turned guru, who dispenses wisdom from behind the grill of a penitentiary visitors' room. The prattle of such nitwits is exhausting. The cops in Frank's life are groin-kicking extortionists, but his true nemesis is a fence (Robert Prosky) who appears to have cornered the Middle Western market for hot merchandise. He is a fat man with a ready smile, a fatherly manner and a brisk way with defectors, of whom Frank is one.

This bloodletter, directed and written by Michael Mann from a book by Frank Hohimer, is not worth much discussion, except that in the camera and sound departments it illustrates the thriller trend. Donald Thorin, director of photography, is an enthusiast for the dazzlement of neon light, especially as diffused by heavy rain. He fancies camera angles, achieved I would guess by helicopter, so tricky that they draw attention away from what they are intended to divulge. And he prefers that the actors should, whenever possible, disport themselves in a velvety darkness that obscures their purposes, along with any inconvenient flaws in the plot. Meanwhile, on the stereophonic soundtrack, a group named Tangerine Dream assaults the theater with a rolling, booming barrage that covers the sound of small-arms fire, to say nothing of shouted dialogue. During moments of high peril, the noise rises above the level of annoyance to that of acute pain. On several such occasions a young woman seated next to me clapped her hands over her ears and fled to the tranquillity of the lobby.

Jacques Doillon's *La Drôlesse* is a small, affecting, but arbitrarily disturbing picture. It concerns a transient relationship between Mado, an 11-year-old schoolgirl, and François, a youth of 20. These two are played, very well indeed, by Madeleine Desdevises and Claude Hebert, both of whom come from farm communities similar to the one shown in the film. It is a disturbing work because Doillon sets up a situation calculated to alarm the viewer and keeps the danger imminent throughout. He could have told his story under conditions that would not have produced this suspense, but then it would have been a sweet, sentimental tale like many others.

Mado and François are unloved and friendless. She lives with a sluttish mother, he with a mother and stepfather who treat him with contempt and have exiled him to an attic room of the farm willed to him by his father. One day he abducts Mado as she is returning home from school and hides her in his attic retreat. François guards his secret with a certain ingenuity, a task made easier by the fact that Mado is entirely complacent in the role of victim and because the farm couple is indifferent to everything that concerns him. Otherwise, he is a timid and feckless youth, given to fantasy and alternating between dejection and sudden bursts of resolution. Deprivation has stunted him; at moments he seems deficient. Mado is by turns a little girl and a precociously seductive female. The two share a bed and she invites him to share intimacies, at one point suggesting that he "make her a baby." He rejects all such advances, his attitude being that of a hen with one chick.

This peculiar idyll, during which the relationship settles into warm domesticity, goes on for some weeks, and ends only when his mother informs François that the police have been looking for him because his motorbike license has expired and that he will undoubtedly be put in jail. Believing this, he sets Mado free (she could, in fact, have escaped whenever she wished). In a final scene, the two of them re-enact the kidnapping for a group of gendarmes, a very odd business that looks less like the conclusion of *La Drôlesse* than the opening of some entirely different film.

It is a pretty movie but not a very attractive one. It flies in the face of one's expectations, not only as to the relationship between François and Mado but also as to the reaction of a village when a small girl disappears. Essentially, it is drama by titillation—a poor way, I think, to deal with people as appealing and vulnerable as these two. □

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A		A		O		A		A		E		N		
C	A	R	A	W	A	Y		T	E	L	L	E	R	S
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E		L		R		T		M		W		S		E
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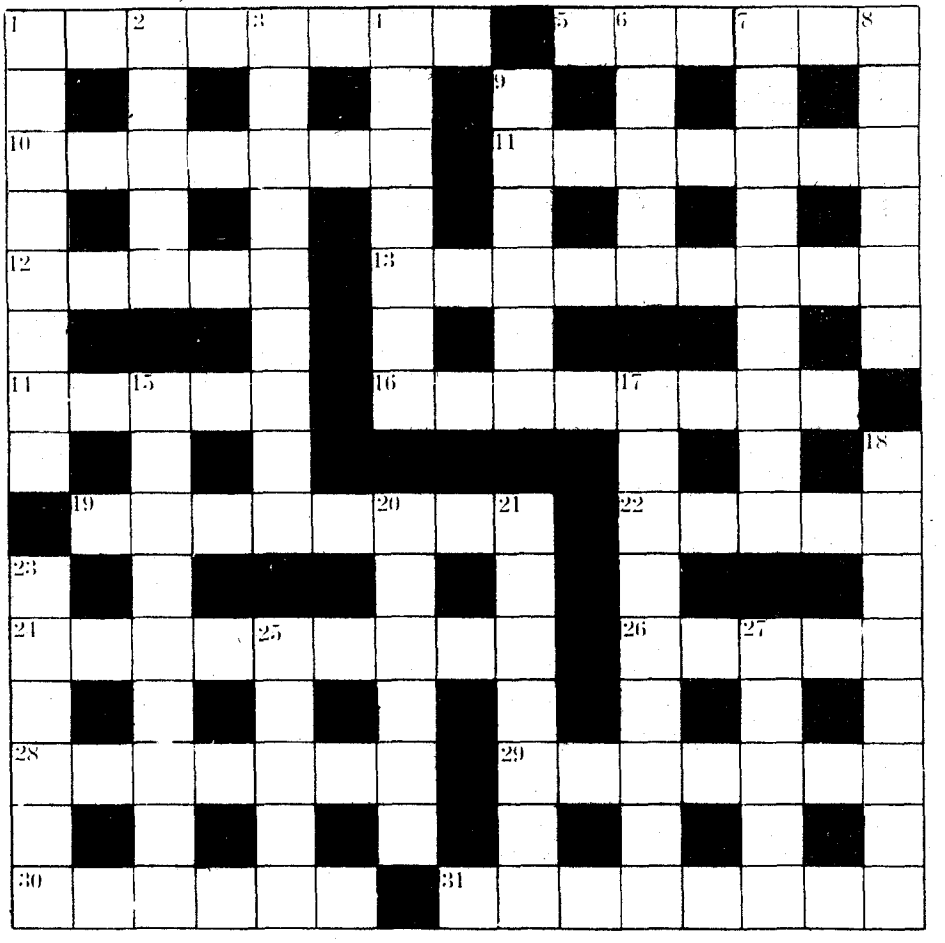
Crossword Puzzle No. 1864

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 5 What mountain eagles and cows do? Look long and hard for the answer! (4,4,3,3)
10 and 11 Not the nobleman who debugs things—as many of us have learned by heart! (3,5,6)
12 This bridge was hard to cross, for some students—especially at the end of their classes. (5)
13 For example, a dandelion around the upturned earth might be showing the actions of the elements. (9)
14 A resinous substance that makes for a difficult mile around one point. (5)
16 Such things might frighten some, but make the rest clap. (8)
19 Equivalent, more or less, to how it was in the good old days? (2,2,4)
22 An old official—one's mate sounds rough! (5)
24 Heart failure? One might hear *vox humana* with it! (5,4)
26 An old diet—now for the birds! (5)
28 The limb is broken, so hunt this game. (7)
29 Leave what the ring finger might have . . . or the circus wagon. (7)
30 Swallow, perhaps, found in two points associated with such states as Alabama and Louisiana. (6)
31 Commonly thought of as the sort of thing sold with pitch. (Evidently the rattler had plenty of grease.) (5,3)

DOWN

1 and 23 Might it be warmer in bed? (3-5,6)
2 What you have to have is seen rising about Land's End. (5)
3 Photo development about a poor risk in out-of-date clothing. (4,5)
4 Dresses do, up inside certain warehouses. (2-5)
6 Possibly the first point of the Union, once. (5)
7 A good dessert to complement chicken pie? (5,4)
8 All the this? It's a Shakespearean stage! (6)
9 *What You Will?* (Legally, that is!) (6)
15 Do such types sometimes find it hard coming back? (4-5)
17 One too little to keep as a reversion? (5-4)
18 What we are told not to get may be foul. (8)
20 There's confusion here! (Job description follows.) (6)
21 It's no longer simple to assign a meaning to something. (7)
23 See 1 down
25 The prize suggests that no ringer is involved. (5)
27 Got on the back of nothing but horses and bulls here. (5)

E LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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There's much talk these days about the New Right. In your 116 years of existence as a liberal magazine you've seen a lot. What is your opinion of the New Right?

New? What's new about it? Only their haircuts and their polyester suits are new. These fellows have been saying the same thing since Jay Cooke, Jay Gould and J. P. Morgan.

You are referring to some famous businessmen of the nineteenth century, I believe.

That's right. Back when I was starting out we had what Mark Twain called "the Gilded Age." You had to admire those old Robber Barons, though. They stole the country fair and square. None of this public relations snake oil like today. "The public be damned," old William Henry Vanderbilt said. That's what *he* thought about public relations.

Do you mean big business is more public-spirited today?

No. Just more P.R.-minded. When Mobil steals the consumer's dollar, it takes out a long-winded ad saying it is fighting the energy shortage.

What else is different about big business today?

Well, back in the Gilded Age they believed in the survival of the fittest. If you went bust, you didn't run crying to the government for a bail-out. You just went out and stole another streetcar line or formed a new trust.

So Ronald Reagan's New Beginning doesn't impress you very much?

New beginning? I call it the same old soak-the-poor plan for bigger corporate profits. Back then they called it Social Darwinism; now they call it Kemp-Roth. In my day we had John D. Rockefeller. Now we have multinationals. Nothing much has changed. I guess that's why I'm still around. Somebody's got to tell people what to do when they get fed up. That's why we published Robert Sherrill on Big Oil and Mark Green on Cowboy Capitalism and Harry Caudill on the Synfuel Follies and David Noble and Nancy Pfund on Big Business Goes to College. If *you're* getting fed up, just fill out that coupon and subscribe to *The Nation*. I wasn't born yesterday.

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